

THE  
LETTER  
OF

The Lord Cardinal  
DENHOFF  
Bp. of *CESENE*.

Directed to the  
PASTORS and CONFESSORS  
OF HIS  
*DIOCESS,*

Exhorting them to make use of  
his Pastoral Instruction touch-  
ing the Administration of the  
Sacrament of PENANCE.

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Printed in the Year 1709.

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1841

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The Lord Cardinal

DEPOSE



By the

Decree of the

PASTORS and CONFESSORS

OF HIS

DIocese

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his Pastoral Instruction touch-  
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Bishop of CESENE.

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*To the Curates and Confessors of our  
Diocess.*

**S**ince our coming to this Diocess,  
and our being Charg'd with the  
care of it, we have often reflect-  
ed upon the Obligation, which all  
Christians contract the day they are Bap-  
tiz'd, of leading a Holy and Innocent Life,  
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after the example of our Saviour Christ according to St. Paul in his Epist. Gal. 3. 27. *For as many of you as are Baptis'd in Christ, have put on Christ, and to the Rom. 6. 4. For we are buried together with him by Baptism into Death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of Life. and ver. 6. Knowing this, that the old Man is Crucified with him, that the body of Sin may be destroy'd, to the end we may serve Sin no longer.* We have likewise at the same time consider'd, how few acquit themselves of this strict Obligation, the greatest part of Mankind, abandoning themselves without restraint to all sort of Sins and Irregularities, as if they were not call'd to a State of Sanctity. And having enquir'd into the cause of so great a Disorder, we thought sometimes it proceeded from the little care Parents take in the good Education of their Children; or because the Idea of a Christian life, is in a manner lost, we no longer looking for it in the H. Scripture, where it is to be found, mark't out by the Finger of God himself; But after all, having Examin'd matters more narrowly, we are fully perswaded, that the great Evil has its rise from Ignorant and Negligent Confessors, who wanting either Ability, or Courage, proper for this Ministry, are not much concern'd



concern'd to require of their Penitents a Change of Life, and therefore let them go on in their Sins, to the great Dishonour of Christian Religion, and with evident danger of Damnation to themselves.

To remedy so Deplorable a State, of a People whom God has call'd out of the darkness of Sin, to his admirable Light of Grace, we cannot think of any means more Efficacious, than to Instruct you thoroughly, of the manner how you are to carry your selves in the Tribunal of Penance; to the end, that on the one hand you may inspire Sinners with a firm Confidence in the Mercy of God, who Communicates his Grace liberally in this Sacrament; and that on the other hand, you may not permit your Penitents to sleep on in their Sins, by a false Hope, that they shall be forgiven, when they please.

You will find in this following Instruction, that as the Church at all times, took great care to hinder, that the Sacrament of Penance should not be expos'd to the Profanation either of Confessors, or Penitents: So Pastors now adays, should take the like concern to Heart, and enter into the same Spirit; and the more, because the Enemies of our Salvation, knowing that this Sacrament is the only means of recovering



the Grace of God, lost after Baptism, try their utmost endeavours to render it (as much as they can) useless. We shall in the Sequel observe to you (that altho' the Church, by the Rules which she has prescrib'd in the last General Council, sufficiently shews, that she conserves the same Spirit and Sentiments as to them) there are however, certain Opinions in the World, which are very contrary to her Spirit and Sentiment, which you are carefully to shun, as so many Rocks lying hid before the Harbour. These are they which are set down in the Popes Decree of 24 Sept. 1665. (and others since.) Some of which are condemn'd as deviating from the Simplicity of the Gospel, and the Doctrine of the H. Fathers, who certainly ought to be prefer'd before Modern Authors, when the Law of God is concern'd, which is not subject to the Inconstancy of Time, nor the Prescriptions of Men. The Authority of these new Doctors being of no Consideration, when they depart from the common Sentiment of Fathers, which may be found in the Body of Canon Law, and in several Authors sufficiently known and noted down in the following Instruction,

We shall explicate in the Sequel, what the chief Qualities are of a good Confessor, and we reduce them to Eight, viz. 1. Innocency of Life. 2. Learning

Learning. 3. Prudence. 4. Piety. 5. Charity. 6. Courage. 7. Secrecy. 8.

A mature Judgement naturally Good and Just. After having explicated the good Qualities of a Confessor, we pass on to the Faults which Penitents commit: Some of which are fallen into before Confession, some in, and others after. The Faults that go before Confession, are 1. Omitting to make a good and careful Examen of Conscience. 2. Wilfully committing some Mortal Sin. 3. To defer exciting themselves to Contrition till they are at the Feet of their Confessor. And on this Occasion we shew, That Contrition, to be the matter of the Sacrament, ought to have two Conditions, One that it ought to be accompanied with some Act of the true Love of God above all things, that may destroy the Love of Sin; the other Condition is, that our Contrition be supernatural, both as to the Act and Object. We also observe to you on this Occasion, how you are to lead your Penitents from Fear to Love, seconding by this, the Workings of God in their Son's. We also admonish you, that neither the sole Fear of Temporal Punishments, nor the Grief caused by some Damages, which we have receiv'd in our Goods, or other Temporal Advantages, are sufficient Dispositions for Justification; altho' God

often makes use of the Temporal Evils and Disgraces that Sinners fall into, in order to procure their Conversion ; and on this Occasion, we give some Marks to know whether the Sorrow be Efficacious or not ; We pass from these to other Faults, which are fallen into, by Penitents before Confession. The 4th. Fault is, That they do not take care to procure Experienc'd Confessors of an Exemplary Life, and endow'd with Christian Prudence. The 5th Fault is, That they do not bring with them a true Resolution of Renouncing Sin, where we explicate wherein this Resolution consists. The 6th. That Penitents defer their Confessions, which are of a long standing, and of intricate Incidents, to some principal Feast, when 'tis Impossible their Ghostly Father can have Time to discharge his Duty, as he ought, either to God or their Penitents.

The Faults which the Penitents commit in Confession : Are, 1st. They say several things, that are not to the purpose ; and neglect to say what really is. 2. They do not bring with them the Humility that is requisite. 3. They tell their Sins without any Sense of Compunction, as if they were repeating a Story of an Indifferent matter. 4. They have not necessary Discretion in some Cases. 5. They want that Docility which they ought to have.

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There are also two Principal Faults, which Penitents fall into after Confession: One is, That they fulfil not the Penances enjoin'd them; the other is, That generally they live just as before, without putting themselves to the trouble of Correcting, or Leaving Sin; so they do not shew any Mark, that they are really Penitent.

Next we propole a Short Method of making a good Confession; to which are added the Questions, that are to be put to Penitents, before they begin their Confession; some, or all, according to the necessity of some Penitents, and the Circumstances of others. Then we give some Directions which Ghostly Fathers may make use of, as to Confession, and lay down an easy way of examining those Penitents, who do not know how to make their Confessions; reducing the greatest part of Sins to the Ten Commandments: And there, at the 2. Commandment, a Digression is made, for to observe a great abuse touching Swearing, &c. From this, we go on to speak of the Remedies against Sins, and of the manner of applying them profitably: And after having shew'd the Absolute Necessity of Medicinal Penances, then we give an Account of general ones, against all sort of Sins, and of Particular, or rather

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Specifick



Specifick, to cure some Penitents of certain vicious Habits. The General Remedies, are, 1. Prayer. 2. Reading Good Books and Meditation. 3. Acts of Virtue, contrary to Sin. 4. To Confess often. 5. Fasting. 6. Alms. 7. Watching. 8. Certain conditional Penances. You will also find there, proper Remedies, to be apply'd to every Kind or Species of Sin; upon which we shall give you a necessary Advice, which is, That such sort of Penances ought to continue, as long as the Evil against which they are employ'd; as is the Custom, in Corporal Distempers.

After having spoke of Medicinal Penances, then we come to explicate those others, which are call'd Satisfactory; on this Occasion, the Doctrin of the Council of *Trent* is produc'd; adding some Important Reflections upon the Words of the Council: After this an Objection is answer'd, which may be made upon the Subject of imposing Penances, proportionable to the Number and Quality of Sins. And because some Confessors stand in need of being instructed more particularly upon that Subject; we have therefore upon this, given some Advice, which seem'd Necessary. 1. That Ghostly Fathers are not to load the Memory of their Penitents with Diversity of Penances. 2. That the Time is to be limited

limited. 3. That great Discretion is to be us'd. 4. That Ghostly Fathers should help and assist their Penitents to satisfy the Justice of God. 5. That ill grounded Difficulties of the Penitents, are not to hinder Priests, from acquitting the obligation of their Charge. 6. That Ghostly Fathers must not think, that they have an Absolute Power to impose what Penances they please. 7. That they are to remember, that the Satisfactory Penances by their Nature, are to be painful. And on this Occasion, another Objection is answer'd, touching the Obligation of proportioning Penances to the Sins confess'd. And here is suggested likewise a Prudent and Charitable Method of prevailing with Penitents to accept of their Penances. 8. That to proportionate Satisfactory Penances, there is a Regard to be had to the Greatness of the Contrition in the Penitent, and according to the Measure of Contrition, the Sacrament of its own Nature contributes to lessen the Obligation of the Punishment. After this, we propose the Opinions, which appear, to be the truest, touching the changing of Penances, and the State the Penitent ought to be in, to satisfy God, by those Penances, which are enjoin'd him; which has given us Occasion to examin, whether one ought to exact

exact the performing the Penances before or after Absolution; whereupon, after having made, as we ought, a Distinction; we have follow'd the most common Opinion of the Divines of this Age, whose Sentiment, joyn'd with the Doctrine of *St. Bernard*, made us resolve; That habitual Sinners, ought to begin to perform their Penances before they receive Absolution; because it is what the Justice of God exacts from them; the Nature of the Habit, which they have contracted, and the Respect due to Justifying Grace. Upon which, we declare what our Sentiment is touching the Question, whether the Penitent satisfy the Penance, enjoyn'd him, by doing those works, which otherwise he was oblig'd to do: And we assert that the Prayers enjoyn'd for Penances, ought to be said without voluntary Distractions. In fine, we have remark'd an Abuse, which some Ghostly Fathers commit, in the Time of a Jubilee, or of Plenary Indulgences; and have declar'd, what the Intention of the Church is, in granting this Sort of Indulgences; as it is set down in the Popes Constitutions, and acknowledg'd by the Cardinals *Cajetan*, *Baronius* and *Bellarmin*; whence it appears, that the Church always preserves the same Spirit, in the dispensing of these Sacred Treasures.

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We proceed to enumerate those Cases in which Absolution ought to be refus'd, or defer'd; taken partly out of the Roman Ritual, and partly out of other works of unquestionable Authority. And they are these which follow. 1. When Penitents do not give Tokens of True Sorrow, whereupon we lay down some other Signs that of True Sorrow, besides what we have already hinted at. 2. When they do not depose the Hatred and Enmity, which they retain or have against their Neighbour. 3. When they will not restore [to their Neighbour, their Goods or Honour, which they have taken from him. 4. When they will not depart from a near Occasion of Sin. 5. When they will not in some other Occasion renounce Sin, nor correct their way of Living; upon which we remark, that the Sacrament of Penance cannot be administred, when the Matter is doubtful; except it be at the point of Death. 6. When the Penitents refuse to make Reparation for the Scandal they have caus'd. 7. When they have reserv'd cases. 8. When they are ignorant of the principal Mysteries of our Holy Faith. 9. When they do not know, or do not comply with the obligations of their State. 10. When they are obstinate in following Opinions, which an Able and Learned Ghostly Father judges to be improbable, or very slightly probable



probable. In fine, we Answer two and twenty Objections, which may be made against the laudable Practice of refusing or deferring Absolution in the Cases which we explicate at length in this present Instruction.

We therefore exhort you to read it often, since we have Collected together several Directions, proper to help you in the Application and Care you are to take, to learn an Art which several Ghostly Fathers Practice and Exercise without well Understanding it, imagining however without sufficient Grounds, that when they have read one or two Authors, which treat of Cases of Conscience, they know enough, without taking pains to Understand the Nature of the Indispositions of Souls; or minding to apply Remedies proper for their Cure. If we saw the Death of Souls, with our Eyes, as we do that of the Body, the deplorable Sight of so many Souls as Perish thro' the Fault of Confessors, would move very many amongst them, to change their Method in the Cure of the Spiritual Indispositions of Souls, caus'd by Sin. But the Death of the Soul is not seen; If there be any Marks, they are generally not believ'd to be such for certain; and if they are, 'tis imagin'd, that it is very easy to recover the Life of the Soul, that nothing more is Necessary than to tell their Sins

Sins to a Confessor ; which is an Error, God knows, but too too common. For this reason it is, that we propose in this Instruction, the properest Means, to shew Penitents, which way such Souls, as have lost the Grace of God, may recover it ; and to establish those, who have already recover'd lost Grace ; and this to the end that Penitents may not be in Hazard of their Salvation, and that all the World may see how Valuable and Glorious the Medicinal Grace of our Saviour Christ is. Make then a profitable Use of this Instruction, and remember that even your eternal Salvation depends upon the due Administration of the Sacrament of Penance ; for if you procure by this means, that Sinners perform Fruits worthy of Penance, in changing their Life, and satisfying God as they ought for their Sins ; then you will have great Reason to trust in the Mercy of God. But on the contrary, if you permit Sinners to come still with the same Sins, thus rendering Confession a Sacrilegious Formality, thus entertaining them in their Vices, in giving such Penances which bear no manner of Proportion with their Sins, you will then have great Reason to fear, the Justice of God will require an Account for the Loss of so many Souls, which might have been sav'd. It being but too true, that many Priests would not have been of the number of  
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the Reprobate, if they had never been Confessors.

*Given at Cesene in our Episcopal Palace the 15 of August, the day of the glorious Assumption of B. Mary, the Immaculate Virgin, Mother of God 1696.*

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## C H A P. I.

*John Casimir Denhoff Priest Cardinal of the H. R. C. of the Title of St. John before Port Latin, by the mercy of God, and Favour of the Holy Apostolic See.*

**BISHOP of C E S E N E,**

*To all Pastors, Vicars, Missioners, Secular and Regular of our District.*

**Benediction.**

**T**HE Catholick Church, always assisted by Jesus Christ her Invisible Head and Lord, and particularly guided by the Holy Ghost, has ever had special Care, that the Sacrament of Penance should be holy:

holily and duly Administred, having to this end and purpose, prescrib'd divers Rules, that the said Sacrament might not be Prophain'd by ignorant or negligent Confessors, or by Penitents, who behave themselves in the great Affair of their Salvation with so much Coldness and Negligence, that they cannot be excus'd. 'Tis true, that for these latter Ages of Christianity, the Church has left it to the Prudence and Discretion of Confessors, to regulate and moderate the former Rigour of Penances, the Ancient Discipline in this regard, not being able to be kept up in all its Force and Vigour, by reason of the Weakness of Christians in these latter Times, in which as our Blessed Saviour foretold, Charity and the Love of God should decay in a great measure, and become very cold. However the Church in the Council of *Trent*, takes care to express all the Zeal possible for preserving the Ancient Discipline, it being necessary to provide that the Repentance of Sinners should not be without Fruit, but that their Conversion be true and sincere: and having explicated herself in the clearest manner to that effect; there is great reason to wonder how certain Opinions have crept in, and are establish'd by some Divines, and have found Credit with very many Confessors, since it is sufficiently manifest, according to the Doctrine of the Council, how contrary they are to it.

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To satisfy therefore our Obligation and Charge incumbent on us, by procuring that the Sacrament of Mercy should be Administred and Received in our Diocess, according to the Intention of the Holy Church, which appears plainly in the Canons of the Councils, and in all the Writings of the most celebrated Pastors and Doctors; we are resolv'd therefore to give you this Instruction entirely supported by the Rules and Maxims contain'd in Holy Scripture, Fathers, and the Decrees of Popes and Councils, and in the Works of the best Authors : To the end, that these Lights being thus collected, may serve to lead you through the Obscurity of so many Opinions, which at present Eclipse, and darken the Truth : We hope, that the Love of Jesus Christ, whose Ministers you are, will move you to make use of it; that so you may render Efficacious and Salutary that Sacrament, which the Divine Goodness has ordain'd for the good of your Penitents, by which you will make it appear, that you are Faithful Dispensers of the Mysteries of God.

Take this for certain, that altho' the Church does not observe always, the same exterior Disciplin in the Sacrament of Penance, yet she always preserves the same Spirit. She indeed prescribes several ways to ruin and beat down Sin, sometimes by one, and sometimes

times by other Means, according as Circumstances are; but she is Invincible in the Design, that there should be no Truce made with Sin, knowing very well, as St. *Aug.* says, That nothing can secure our Salvation but the Love of God, and Hatred of Sin; and he who becomes a Friend to one, must necessarily Declare himself an Enemy to the other.

The Enemy of our Salvation knows very well that the Sacrament of Penance is the only Means which remains after Baptism, to Destroy Sin, and to return to the Grace of God, and for this reason, there is not one of the Sacraments, which he has attack'd so fiercely, and so many different ways, and this with the damnable Design to render it, (if he could) useless, one way or other.

There is no Reason to suspect or fear, that good Catholicks will let themselves be surpriz'd by the Error of Heretical Doctrine, which endeavours to Lessen and even Destroy the Effect of this Sacrament; because their Faith Preserves them sufficiently from this Danger: But what they have to fear, is, some certain Rocks that lye hid, and are not perceiv'd by them; And 'tis Charity in their Pastors to discover them to their People; to the end, that such as have Suffer'd Shipwrack by Sin, may lay fast hold

hold of Penance as the second Plank to save themselves, and get safe to the Haven, and not strike against those Rocks, and so be lost without Recovery.

Now those Rocks, are certain Opinions which Lull Sinners asleep, and render them insensible to the evils which they carry in their Breasts; and there are few who take care enough to avoid them, because these Opinions being taught by Catholick *Authors*, and not being all as yet expressly rejected by the Church, many therefore think they may blindly follow them. However the Condemnation which the See Apostolic has pass'd upon a great Number of Propositions, relating to Morality at different times, as Grounded upon an ill Foundation, and only fit to delude and deceive Sinners, ought to suffice prudent Persons, to be precaution'd against such like Doctrines, by Examining them Seriously, and with a sincere Intention to embrace and follow those, which come nearest Truth, and reject those, at least as suspected, which most favour Concupiscence.

It would be best to take as a Rule of your Examen, on this Subject, that which *Alexander* the VII. gives in his Decree, *Sept. 24. 1665.* where he declares, That those are Dangerous Opinions in Morality, which are supported by Reasonings, disagreeing with the Simplicity

plicity of the Gospel, and the Doctrines of the Holy Fathers, by which they would Widen the way of Salvation (to the unspeakable damage of Souls) which God the Supream verity it self has declar'd to be strait and narrow. There is introduc'd, says the Pope, into matters which concern Conscience, a way or manner of reasoning intirely foreign to the Simplicity of the Gospel, and the Doctrine of the Holy Fathers, and which would be capable, if follow'd as a Rule in Practice, to occasion great Corruption among the Faithful. Wherefore to the end that it may never happen, that the way of Salvation should be enlarg'd, or rather spoil'd and corrupted, to the great Detriment of Souls; after the Sovereign Truth which is God himself, and whose Words remain Eternally, has declared the Way to be Narrow, &c. Whence you are to infer as a certain and unquestionable Maxim, Grounded upon the Oracular Declaration of the Vicar of Christ; that all those Opinions which have some of the Marks mention'd above, are not at all fit to be made use of for the directing the Consciences of the Faithful; for as the Christian Faith is supported by Holy Scripture, and the Tradition of the Church, so Christian Morality is not acquainted with any other Grounds; And therefore take special Care of any ways believing that the Church will ever  
abandon



abandon what relates to the Rules of Morality, to follow the Inventions of human Wit. Of which *St. Gregory* says,  
 “ That many times the Wit of Man de-  
 “ ceives it self, and hides what it has  
 “ in the Heart, and it often happens then,  
 “ that he has one Intention within, and  
 “ another different from what appears  
 “ outwardly. *Pastoral. Part. i. c. 9.*

The best Interpreters of those Laws, which are meerly Human, and subject to change according to Times and Circumstances, are the Modern Doctors, who are our Contemporaries; but for the Law of God, being it is unchangeable and cannot vary, the Antients are the best Interpreters, not only because they liv'd nearer Apostolick or Primitive Ages, and consequently must know the Sentiments of the Apostles best; but also, because they had more Respect and Affection for Ecclesiastical Tradition, even in things relating to Morality, so that when they agree in any Doctrine, no body ought to pretend to prefer any Modern *Authors*, who lived at so great a distance from the Primitive Ages. Make use therefore of the Light of Tradition, to discern the Truth, and do not so much as mind the Appearance of human reasonings, which are invented to sweeten the way of the Cross, to please Men in their Corruption; if you do, you will deserve by this ill Disposition, to be de-priv'd

priv'd of the Lights of Heaven, according to that saying of St. *Aug.* *That God sends Darkness upon those Minds, in Punishment of their irregular Concupiscences with which they are possess'd.* Lib. 1. de Confess : cap. 18.

Supposing then, that to be true, which we have just now declar'd, That Tradition is equally the Rule of the Truths of Faith, and of Morality, which is what we learn from another Pope by these words, *That the common Law of the Church, whether the Gospel, the Apostles, the Prophets, the Canons Establish'd by the Holy Ghost, and Consecrated by the Reverence with which all the World has Receiv'd them, and the Decrees of the Apostolick See which do not Vary from this Rule ;* what remains next to know is, which are those Books where Confessors may find this Tradition ; all not being in Circumstances to Read over entire Volumes of Fathers and Canons. The best Collection that may be had, is that which is found in the body of the Canon Law, where are to be seen an Infinity of Cases of Conscience, resolved according to the Holy Rules of Christian Morality among the Ancient Divines, St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, St. Raymond, St. Antoninus, Angelus Clavassius, Silvester Prieiras, and Martin Navarr, who profess an entire respect for venerable Antiquity,

Antiquity, of which you will find express Tokens in all their Works. And among the Modern Divines, the Cardinals, *Tolens* and *Hugo*, have writ very well of Penance, and the Treatises they have made of this matter, may be of very great profit for Confessors.

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## C H A P. II.

### *Of the Qualities of a Confessor.*

I N the first Place, you are to know what are the Qualities of a good Confessor. In the Holy Tribunal of Confession he Performs the Functions of a Judge, a Father, a Physician and of a Minister of the Church; and all these Titles require him to be a Person of a good Life, Learned, Prudent, Pious, Charitable, Courageous and Steady Secret, Upright, and Mature in Judgement. Whence we may conclude that it is not so easy a thing, as 'tis generally believ'd, to meet with a good Confessor, and a good Director, and therefore that Pious *D'âvila* so Celebrated for his Spirituality in these latter Ages, us'd to say, That such a Confessor was to be sought for among a Thousand,  
and

and St. Francis Sales among ten Thousand, observing to us by this Expression how rare it is to find such Guides as are truly able to Conduct Souls in the way of Salvation, which ought to be to us an Advertisement to take care always to seek the best.

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### C H A P. III.

#### *The first Quality, Purity and Innocence of Manners.*

**T**IS with reason that among the first Qualities of a Confessor is mentioned that he be of a good Life. For if he be a Judge, he ought to live so, that the guilty may not reproach him with the same Crimes he Condemns in them. This is what this Canon remarks: *The Priest, to whom all sort of Sinners present themselves, and before whom all Spiritual Distempers are expos'd, ought to be such, as cannot be reproach'd with any of those Faults which he it to Condemn in others. Can. Qui vult. dist. 6. de peniten:* If he is a Father, he ought to give good Example, since that way of Exhorting, is the most Powerful and most Efficacious, *There is no Voice that Penetrates Deeper into Hearts,*  
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then



When that which is supported by the Life of him that Speaks; because his Example assists those, who hear him, to put in Practice what he Recommends, to them by his Words. According to St. Gregory, *Past. part, 2. c. 3.* If he is Physician, it is Necessary he should be in Health, least it should be reply'd. *Physician first Cure thy Self.* In fine if he is a Minister of the Sacrament and Dispenser of the Mysteries of our Redemption, this Quality requires, that he should always live a Holy and Innocent Life, because Holy Things ought to be perform'd Holily; *Sancta Sanctè.* Not that it can be pretended, that Confessors are impeccable, for we know very well that no one can be exempt from Venial Faults, since St. James 3. 2. says, *That all of us commit many Faults.* But that which we require of them, is, that they be exempt from grievous Sins, always Endeavouring to live in the Grace of God; that they Advance daily in Piety, in the Practice of good Works, in all Virtues, and particularly in a Zealous Desire of the Salvation of Souls, in so much that they may be the good Odour of Jesus Christ in all places; that they behave themselves in Publick as having Authority and proper Instruments in the Hand of God for the Conversion of Souls. For 'tis certain, that one chief reason, why very many Penitents remain in their

their Loose Way of Living, is because many Confessors themselves lead Irregular Lives, insomuch that making no great account of their own, they come to make much less of others. Hence it is, that Maxim has gain'd Credit with Abundance of Confessors and Penitents; That 'tis sufficient to go to Confession after falling into Sin, for to get Absolution altho' theres no appearance of any Amendment or change of Life. And their Understanding being blinded with the Darknes of Sin, which every day increases upon them, 'tis no wonder that they take Darknes for Light, and esteem the most extravagant Opinions as fine inventions, and as sure ways to excuse and favour Sinners.

## C H A P. IV.

*The Second Quality, is Knowledge.*

THE Qualities of a Judge, Physician, and Minister of the Sacrament which we have already observ'd, require some Competency of Knowledge and Learning. The Canon *Qui vult* before mentioned, requires this of a Confessor, as he is a Judge, as appears by these following Words. *That he who is Judge*

in Spiritual Matters take care that he be not only Exempt from Crimes, but ought also to be endow'd with Learning, because 'tis necessary he should know what he Judges of. The Authority of Judge which he Exercises does not allow, that he should be Ignorant of what he is to pass Judgment upon. St. Gregory is of the same Opinion. That Knowledge is required in Physicians of Souls, when he says, *Who does not know, that the Wounds of the Soul are more Hidden, than those of the Body: However you see but too often that those make Profession to be Physicians of Souls, who have no Knowledge of the Rules of a Spiritual Life; whilst those who have no Understanding of the Strength of the Druggs and Physick, would be asham'd to take upon them the Quality of a Physician for the Body.* As they are then Ministers of the Sacraments and Directors of Souls, there is great Knowledge requisite; for without it, they would be in Danger of Prophaning the Blood of Jesus, whose Merits are apply'd by this Sacrament, in dispensing them to the unworthy, and leading Souls, for want of the Light of Knowledge, into Precipices according to that saying of the Gospel, *Math. 15. 14. If the Blind lead the Blind, they both fall into the Ditch.*

We could wish that all the Confessors of our Diocess were Eminent in Learning,

Learning, but since this is not possible we shou'd be content that they had a moderate Degree of Learning, for a great Pope was satisfy'd with this even in Pastors themselves, when otherwise they have good Qualities which render them worthy of their Ministry; and see here how he Explicates what these two sorts of Learning are. We call, says he, that, an Eminent Learning which knows how to discuss the most subtle Questions, give the Resolutions, and answer upon the spot to Difficulties which are propos'd. But a Moderate Learning consists, in being able to Examin in some sort, the Cases which present themselves, altho' one cannot resolve all; to be able to search in Books, for Clearing of Points which one ought to know, altho' one cannot immediately answer them. This Moderate Knowledge in a Confessor may be generally Reduc'd to these Points. 1. That he knows how to Distinguish, at least by common Rules, and in most ordinary Cases, Mortal Sin from Venial. 2. Those Circumstances which change the Species of Sin, or notably Aggravate. 3. The Cases which are Reserv'd to the Pope, or his Bishop. 4. Those Cases to which is Annex'd some Ecclesiastical Censure. 5. Those which oblige to Restitution: 6. Those Sins which are ordinarily committed in every paticular State and Condition. 7. The



Essential Dispositions absolutely Necessary for Penitents, to be capable of Absolution. 8. The Cases in which 'tis Necessary to repeat the former Confessions, and to be able to give certain good Advice to Sinners, to move them to abandon Sin, which is the Principal Fruit of Confessions. 9. To have by them the Collection of Penitential Canons done by *St. Charles Boromens*, that they may the better know how to impose Penances proportion'd in some manner to the greatness of the Sins Confess'd

This knowlege is not to be suppos'd to be attain'd without having read some good Author that treats of Moral Divinity; and if a Confessor is not possess'd of those matters above mention'd, in some moderate degree at least, 'tis impossible he should acquit his Duty, because this Knowlege depends in being vers'd in the positive Laws, *viz.* the Canons, Bulls, and Decrees of Popes, and therefore 'tis scarce possible to know them without Study, let one have never so sharpe or penetrating a Wit otherwise. Whereupon it will not be improper to advise Confessors, not to break off the study of this artfull Knowledge so necessary and at the same time, so difficult Minding them of what *St. Teresa* left written in her Life, and elsewhere in her other works, That it is extreme dangerous to be directed by Ignorant and ill

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instructed Confessors, especially if they pretend to know more then they do; because relying on their own knowlege, they do not consult others, so that the Faults they commit, in the Administration of the Sacrament of Penance, remain without Possibility of Remedy, and so Ruine both themselves and their Penitents.

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## CHAP. V.

*The third Quality, is Prudence:*

**T**HE third Quality of a good Confessor is, great Prudence, not that Prudence of the Flesh, and which is only proper to bring Death, according to that of St. Paul, *The Prudence of the Flesh is Death*; and 'tis this Carnal Prudence, which puts us upon Acting for other ends then for God, and the Salvation of Souls. As for example, it would be an effect of Carnal Prudence, to follow the Practice of some loose and indulgent Confessors, in Administring the Sacrament of Penance; to look on certain Irregular Customs as good, and lawful; to be afraid to give their Penitents, whether Men or Women any trouble, or to avoid contesting with them, tho' they know they

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are Blamable in the sight of God; To dissemble their Sins and excuse them, when ill dispos'd even in essential Points, for fear of loosing their Favour, or rather that their Penitents may be kinder to them; to follow the loose Opinions, in order to draw a greater concourse of Penitents, or to gain the Reputation of a person who decides freely and without Advice, and always almost favouring the Corruption of the World. This is not the Prudence we can in Conscience recommend, but rather highly forewarn all to avoid it. The Prudence we speak of, is that which inclines Directors to imitate such, as the best Instructed, and Experienc'd, and who apply themselves solely to procure the Salvation of their Penitents, and undeceive them of the false Maxims, which the Conversation with the World, might have inspir'd them with, without fear of afflicting them when Necessity obliges, and when their Salvation depends on't.

This Spiritual Prudence makes them prefer the Grace and Friendship of God, before all that is in the World, and renders good Directors implacable Enemies to Sin, to Persecute it to the last, until they have chas'd it away, from the Hearts of their Penitents. This Prudence causes them to chuse in the Administration of the Sacrament of Penance, the best grounded Opinions, and those which come  
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nighest Truth. In this their prudent Design, they earnestly beg of God to enlighten them, purging their Hearts from all Fear and all Worldly Hope, and take great care to keep themselves in the Grace of God. Among different Opinions, they take care to prefer those which are most conform to the Gospel, and Holy Fathers, who are the faithful Interpreters; and they avoid with great care all Extremities, that is, the loose Sentiments as well as the rigid; Truth as well as Vertue, are generally to be met with, in the Golden Medium. There are several other things where Prudence is necessary for a Director, viz. In giving good Council to Penitents, enjoining proper Penances, and in Encouraging their Penitents to Confess their most secret and bosom Sins. Of which we shall afterwards have occasion to Treat in particular, in its proper Place. It suffices to observe here, what the fourth Council of *Lateran* tells us, in these few Words. *That the Priest should be Prudent and Descreeet, to the end, that as a skilful Physitian, he pour Oyle and Wine, into the Wounds of his Penitent, informing himself carefully of the Circumstances of the Person and his Sin, that he may the better Judge what Council he ought to give him, and what remedy to apply, not omitting any thing, that may Contribute to his Cure.*



## C H A P. VI.

*The fourth Quality, is Piety.*

**T**HE next Quality in a Director is Piety, which according to the Apostles is *Useful to every Thing*, and the most Necessary Quality of all, for the Administring this Sacrament. It is what occasions my Addressing my self to you all, Exhorting you with the same Apostles. *1. Tim. 4. 7. Exercise your selves in Piety.* This Exercise consists chiefly in Meditating upon God and His Eternal Truths, whether by Prayer, or reading Spiritual Books: For having Receiv'd Lights and Inspirations to seek God your Selves, you may the easier instill the same Sentiments into the Minds and Hearts of your Penitents. Above all, have a great Care to Read every Day some Part of the New Testament, where you will find Instructions full of the Uction of a Spiritual Life, and as it were an Abridgment of the whole Law of God, which a good Man ought to Meditate on, Day and Night, according to the Advice of the Royal Prophet.

CHAP.

## C H A P. VII.

*The fifth Quality, is Charity.*

THE Charity of a Director ought to be Great, after the Example of St. Paul, who desiring to describe the extent of it to the *Corinthians 2 Epist. 6. 11.* Tells them that his Heart was Enlarg'd with the Affection he had for them. If Confessors had their Hearts fill'd with this Virtue, O! What Advantage would the Faithful receive. But, alafs, True Charity now adays is become so rare in the Ministers of this Sacrament of Penance, that generally we can scarce find the Shadow of it in most of them. Some think that 'tis Charity to grant Absolution to all that ask it, without Reflecting, whether it will be a Benefit to them, or a Disadvantage; whether it will be to give them Life, or Death, according as they are well, or ill dispos'd. Others imagin that they Practice the Virtue of Charity, by giving slender Penances, and no ways Proportionable to the Sins, and Wants of the Penitents. There are others who think it a piece of Charity, not to discover to the Sinner their Dangerous State and Condition, under the vain Pretence that 'tis not

not Necessary to acquaint them with their ill *Circumstances*, even in Cases, where they ought to be well Instructed, and where Ignorance will be very Blamable. This sort of Charity is like that of a Physician, who should give his Patient what Physick he likes best, under Pretence that it is Good in it Self, without considering whether in these Circumstances it may not occasion his Death instead of his Health. Or like that of a Surgeon who Prescribes some Ointment or Sweet Liquors, when there is more need of Canteries, Incisions and bitter Draughts; Or like him who is unwilling to discover to his Patient the Danger he is in, and forbears for fear of giving him Trouble. The True Charity of a Confessor, seeks all ways possible, of Sweetness, or Rigour; of Lenity, or Sharpness, to assist Sinners, when 'tis Necessary, to get them out of the Miserable State of Sin. And as Charity, according to the Apostle, 1. Cor. 13. is *Patient* and *Mild*, so it Inspires Confessors who have it, with great Patience, and Sweetness towards their Penitents. These two Qualities of Pastoral Charity and Patience, ought above all to appear in regard of Ignorant and poor People who present themselves at the Tribunal, as also to such Sinners as are engag'd in Sin, and ill Habits of a long standing; so that, you  
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ought to Receive such sort of Persons with great Patience, not giving them the least Sign that they are Troublesome. Speak to them with much Affability and Mildness, that they may not be Frighted, or Discourag'd from making a good Confession. If you can Absolve them do so, after you have given the Advice which you Judge Convenient and Proper for them. If you cannot absolve them, either by reason that they are not sufficiently Dispos'd, or because of some reserv'd Cases, then redouble your Charity and Sweetness to them; tell them in a way full of Tenderness and Fatherly Affection, that you are very much concern'd that you cannot at that time give them the Comfort and Grace they desire, by sending them away with Absolution; but that you promise them, you desire nothing more hartily, than that they may be in a Condition to Receive it, as soon as they have made themselves capable. If denial of Absolution be occasion'd by reason of some reserv'd Case; then direct them to Superiors, or Confessors, who can absolve them, giving them to understand, how grievous those Sins are, since all Confessors have not leave to absolve them. Encourage them as much as possible to go to such as have, of whom they will be Receiv'd with all the Goodness and Charity imaginable. Let them also know that



that you will not fail to Pray for and to Perform some Penance for them, that it may please God to give them the Grace of a True Conversion.

It is also Necessary that Confessors should use Charity, in enjoining Penances, not requiring such great ones as they might according to the Rigour of the Canons, since Prudence it self requires to observe Moderation, according to St. Charle's Advice in his Instructions to Confessors, who ought according to this Arch-Bishop, to be Prudent in the Imposition of Penances, taking care on the one side that they be not too easy, lest the Power of the Keys, be brought into Contempt, and thereby they make themselves partakers of their Sins: On the other side, that they be not so Heavy and Great that the Penitents refuse to accept of them, or when they have accepted they may be in danger not to fulfil them: But of this Subject of enjoining Penances, we shall treat hereafter.

CHAP.

## C H A P. VIII.

*The Sixth Quality, is Fortitude.*

**F**ortitude and Courage, is a Virtue that is Proper for a Judge, according to the Wise Man, *Ecclesi. 76.* Do not seek to be a Judge, if you find you have not Fortitude and Courage to withstand Injustices. This Virtue consists Principally in Advising and Reprehending Sinners, when there is Necessity, without being aw'd by any Human Respect, applying those salutary Remedies which you believe Necessary, altho' they may cause some Trouble, obliging them to Restitution both of Goods and Fame, when the Penitents are really bound to repair the Damages they have occasion'd: Requiring them also to deprive themselves of things, which put them in the immediate occasion of Sin, altho' they be as Useful and Necessary as their Eye, their Hand, or their Foot, according to the Doctrine of the Gospel. Lastly, enjoin them Convenient Penances, according to the Order and Spirit of the Church. If the greatest Part of Confessors have not this Courageous and Generous Conduct, it Proceeds from this,

this, that they desire to please Men, which is so ill a Disposition, and at the same time so common, that if one could Root it out of the Hearts of the Ministers of the Church, the World would soon be Deliver'd from all Vice, according to the saying of St. Chrysostom, *Hom. 43. op. Imp. in Math. Take from the Clergy the desire to please Men, and you will by that Root out all Vices*.

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## CHAP. IX.

### *The Seventh Quality.*

#### Secrecy:

AS to the *Inviolable Secret* which the Seal of Confession requires, every one is sufficiently satisfied of it, and Casuists make long Treatises on this Subject, and it may be said, that upon this point there is not crept in any Looseness or Breach of Trust. It will not be however unprofitable to give here some Advice on this Occasion. The first is, that to keep the Seal of Secrecy, Temperance is a necessary, and an essential Quality in a Confessor, for he that commits excess, so far as to disturb his Reason, being no longer himself, may very easily discover what he has heard in Confession, so that, he who  
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is Subject to this Vice, ought carefully to abstain from all occasions of Drinking or refrain from Administring the Sacrament of Penance. The 2. is, that Confessors, and above all Pastors, ought never to say, any thing publickly, that may be injurious to those they talk with, for fear lest they should suspect, that what they say they had in Confession. The third is, That Confessors ought to abstain from Talking, even in general of the Confessions they have heard, because according to Scripture *Prov. 10. 19.* when one speaks much, one, can't be exempt from Sin. The 4. is, That they ought not only to keep Secret the Sins they have heard in Confession, but all that which may any ways render Confession odious, as for example, some certain things which if they should come to be known, might shame the Penitents, and occasion them, or their Kindred, to suffer some Damage either in their Goods or Honour. The 5. is, When the Confessor knows a Sin by Confession, and at the same Time by some other Way, 'tis then proper to follow the Doctrine of *St. Thomas*, set down in these Words, *It is the most receiv'd Opinion, that if a Priest knows a thing by ordinary means, whether before or after Confession, he is not oblig'd to keep it Secret; regard still being had to the Knowledge he has, as a Man, for he may say I know this; because I saw it. He is however obliged to keep the Secret,*



cret, in regard of the Knowledge which he had as God, for he cannot say I heard this in Confession. However to avoid all Scandal, he ought to Abstain from speaking, in any manner whatever, except in Case of great Necessity. 4. sent. distinc. 21. q. 3. Act. in c. 1.

## CHAP. X.

### *The Eighth Quality.*

### Maturity of Judgment.

**T**HE last Quality requisite for a good Confessor, is an Upright and Mature Judgement, that he may be able to Judge well of all Things. Maturity of Judgement is acquir'd by Age, but Uprightness, is the Gift of the Author of Nature, And since every Man has generally a good Esteem of his own Judgement, we exhort all P. P. lately Ordain'd, not to trust too much to themselves in this Point; Let them take the Advice of Learned, Pious, and Prudent Persons, who are their Acquaintance, and submit entirely to their Judgement, not only on Account of their Experience and Capacity in Matters which concern Penance and Cases of Conscience, but also as to the natural Disposition  
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of Judging well of Things, a Quality which cannot be supply'd either by Time or Experience, and yet to the Want of it, most of the Mischariages that are committed in the Administration of the Sacrament of Penance are to be attributed; which being never to be known, are without Remedy, and consequently very many Souls are lost for Want of Judging right of Things.

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## C H A P. XI.

### *Faults Committed by Penitents.*

**H**AVING spoken of the Qualities requisite for good Confessors, it follows next to observe to you, The Dispositions requisite for Penitents; for it will be of no great Advantage to have able Confessors, if the Penitents are unprepar'd and Faulty, which for the most Part renders the Sacrament void and Fruitless. Some of the Faults are committed before Confession, some in it, and others are fallen into, after it.

## C H A P. XII.

*The first Fault before Confession.*

**T**HE first Fault before Confession is the Neglect of well examining their Conscience; By which some Mortal Sins are omitted, as well as the Circumstances which change the Species or such as notably aggravate. This Want of Examen renders the Omission of any Mortal Sins, which are not call'd to mind at Confession, no less Criminal, than if they were voluntarily conceal'd; for we are suppos'd to will a Thing, when we do not use the necessary Means to avoid it; so we say, that such a one was the Cause of anothers Death, if he has not allow'd him sufficient Sustenance to support Life. When therefore any such Penitents, present themselves as have not made their Examen at all, or have done it very negligently, exhort them with all the Charity you are able, to prepare themselves as they ought, that they may receive the Grace and Benefit of Absolution and that Sacrament; instructing them at the same Time, how they ought to acquit themselves of that Duty, and assuring them that you shall be always ready

ready and willing to hear their Confession, as soon as they have satisfied their Obligation in this Point.

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## C H A P. XIII.

### *The second Fault before Confession.*

**A** Second Fault of Penitents, is that they wilfully conceal some Mortal Sin in their Confession. This great Fault proceeds chiefly from Want of Faith in the Penitents, who do not sufficiently conceive the Horror of the miserable State into which they throw themselves when they commit such a Sacrilege. 2. From their not being sufficiently instructed in this Point. 3. From the Confessors not knowing how to discharge their Duty in this Holy Tribunal. 4. And lastly, From the Penitents not reposing an entire Confidence in such a Pastor or Ghostly Father. If it be Want of Faith in the Penitents; represent to them the Enormity of the Sacrilege, they commit, bid them Reflect what an unparell'd Folly it would be in a sick Person, having a sovereign and certain Remedy in his Hands for his Distemper, wilfully to mix Poyson with it, and so become guilty of self Murder.



Murder. Now if the Death of the Body be so terrible, what must that of the Soul be, which is a Substance incomparably more Noble and more Valuable. Represent to them, the Danger they are continually in of dying every Moment, and being lost for all Eternity. If it be for want of Instruction, that they run into this Fault, inform and give them to understand, that the only Thing they ought to be ashamed of, is to commit the Sin; and on the contrary, it is highly honorable to Confess it, because we become Slaves to Sin by committing it, according to the Apostle, *Know you not, that to whom you exhibit yourselves Servants to Obey, you are the Servants of him, whom you obey, whether it be of Sin to Death, or of Obedience to Justice. Rom. 6. 16.* So we triumph over it by Confessing it, for by Confessing as we ought we Conquer the Devil, and entirely destroy Sin. Besides, God has Ordain'd that our Confessor should be a Man and not an Angel; to the end, that he may know how to compassinate the human Frailties and Miseries, which he is himself encompass'd with, and subject to: Which ought to be an Encouragement to Sinners to lay open their Consciences in Confession, with Freedom and Candor; Again, to encourage the Sinner to this Duty, let him know, that the Seal of Confession

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is inviolable under Pain of eternal and temporal Fire, so that there is no Reason to apprehend, that any Thing told in Confession will ever be discover'd.

If the Defect we speak of, proceed from the Confessors Ignorance or Want of Experience in discharging his Duty, let him learn of those who are better experienced and more capable; at least let him learn the most common Rules to draw from his Penitents an entire Confession of all their Sins, whereof we shall speak more particularly hereafter. At present it is sufficient to declare to all Confessors, that they must indispensably (according to circumstances) ask those Questions of their Penitents as often as they perceive their said Penitents do not discover or explain their Sins sufficiently, nor with that Sincerity, as they ought. This is what St. Thomas requires of a Confessor, in these Words, It must be said, that a Priest ought to Search the Conscience of his Penitent in Confession, as the Surgeon does the wound he would Cure, and as the Judge sifts the Cause, he would try, because it often happens that the Penitent being ask'd, discovers what otherwise he would have conceal'd out of a false mistaken Shame, in 4 Sent. dist. 19. And the Canon *Qui vult de penit. dist. 6.* gives the same Advice to a Confessor, saying *Let him make*

make an exact and diligent enquiry, examining the Penitent with Prudence and Art, that so he may draw that from him, that which perhaps he does not know be to a Sin, or is ashamed to reveal.

Lastly, if the Defect which Penitents bring to Confession proceeds from a Want of Confidence in their Confessors, then it behoves these, to use all Means possible to remedy it, by gaining them, and by insinuating themselves into their Esteem by Affability, Charity and all sorts of Kindness they can possibly think of, and especially by Example, Behaviour and an irreprehensible Carriage, which cannot fail of attracting the Esteem and Respect of all the World; and above all they are to be very circumspect over themselves, that they do not give the least Suspicion of their not being able to keep Secret, wherefore they are to remember the Advice which St. Thomas gives to Confessors, That the Priest govern himself in all things with a great deal of Maturity and Gravity, That he be neither talkative, nor a babler, for Fear he should by that make himself suspected in Confession: That he do not go to Feasts, nor Assemblies and Conversations of Persons who talk much, lest there should slip from him some Word that might be contrary to the Seal of Confession; and if it happens, that any of his Parishioners or Penitents should give him some injurious Word, that he take great Care  
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not to return the like; for Fear it may be said, that he had discover'd something that he hear'd in Confession. Opusc. 19. alias 65. a. 3. in c.

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## CHAP. XIV.

### *The third Fault before Confession.*

THE Third Fault of Penitents before Confession, is, That some deferr their Contrition or being sorry for their Sins, till the Moment they are at their Confessors feet; for 'tis much harder than we generally imagine, to be sincerely Converted to God, after living a considerable Time in Mortal Sin, especially in some inveterate and irregular Habit. There are three things that must concur to form a true Conversion: The first is a sincere Detestation of all Mortal Sins, such a one as Seperates the Will from the Chains which held them so fast before, but now are broken by Sorrow, and a Resolution and Will, never to commit any Mortal Sins whatever: The 2. is an efficacious Resolution to avoid all Sin; which Resolution cannot be esteem'd such unless it puts us upon finding out the proper means for the compassing of it, The 3.



is a desire to make Satisfaction to an offended God, in the best Manner we are able; that is, by Penance proportionable to the Sins we have committed. By this we may perceive that it is impossible, without such miraculous Grace, as Works the Conversion of a Soul in a Moment, as that of the good Thief, that Sinners guilty of heinous Crimes, or Mortal Sins should have those Dispositions above mention'd in so small a Time, as they are at their Confessors Feet. The Holy Fathers are fully convinc'd of this Truth, for when they speak of this Sacrament of Penance they call it a *laborious Baptism*, whence it is that the Holy Council of Trent, Sess. 14. c. 2. where it makes use of the same Expression with the Fathers of the Church, assures us, That we cannot return to the Newness and Integrity of a Spiritual Life by the Sacrament of Penance, unless we take great Pains and shed many Tears; teaching us thereby, that such as have lost the Life of their Soul by Sin, are oblig'd to dispose themselves by several Acts of Penance, to obtain the Assistance of God for a perfect Conversion of their Heart to Him, his Divine Justice requiring it of us, *Divina id exigente Justitia*, as the same Council affirms The want of this Disposition which is not to be attain'd but by frequent Exercises of Penance, according to the Necessity of every

every Sinner, verifies but too much that famous saying of St. *Ambros*, That it is easier to find such Persons as have preserv'd their Baptismal Innocence, than such as having lost it by Sin, have regain'd it by worthy and true Penance  
*Lib 2. Pœnit. c. 10.*

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## C H A P. XV.

### *The first Condition of Contrition.*

**T**HE Contrition requisite in Penitents ought to have two Conditions, First, it ought to include some Act of the Love of God, which all things well consider'd, seems to be most probable: And this Love ought to excel all irregular Love of Creatures, so that the Sinner by this appretiative Charity, is to Love God above all those Things, which have made or may make him guilty of Mortal Sin. That this Love ought to be such, as we have Just now Mention'd, appears plainly, for as much as it is necessary that the irregular Love of Creatures in which Mortal Sin properly consists, be remov'd out of the Penitents Heart.

Now this Love cannot be remov'd but by a contrary Love, that is, the Love

of God, which ought to be predominant; otherwise the Vicious and Irregular Love of Creatures will still subsist. And it is to no Purpose to say that every Act of the Love of God above all Things, is sufficient to Justifie of it self, and that so a Sinner would be always Justified before Absolution, for this is only truly as to the perfect Love of God, and not as to the imperfect, which we are now speaking of, and this Perfection of the Love of God does not only proceed from the motive which makes us act, but from the Force and Vehemence with which we are carried towards God as the Object of our Love, as Divines Teach, when explaining the Difference there is betwixt imperfect and perfect Contrition, they compare the first to the Dawning of the Day, and the second, To the Meridian Brightness of the Sun, sufficiently denoting thereby that they look upon them both to be of the same Species, only differing in being greater, or less.

The very Catechism publish'd by Order of the Council of *Trent*, owns the Necessity of this Perfection in Contrition, to enable it to blot out Mortal Sins without the Sacrament of Penance, as requiring it should rise to an Emient Degree for the producing of such an Effect. *For shou'd we grant, says this Catechism, That Contrition blots out Sins, who doubts*

doubts but it ought to be so Vehement, so Strong, and so Lively, that the Greatness of the Grief ought to equal that of the Sins? But in regard that few Persons arrive to such a degree, &c. St. Thomas expressly says, it is the Nature of Penance to hate Sin, as it is an Offence to God, that is, thro' the Motive of the Love of God, Sin, says he, cannot be remitted without true Repentance, the Effect whereof is to make us quit Sin, forasmuch as it is against God. p. 3. q. 86. n. 3. in C. This Conclusion being Universal is to take Place as well in the Sacrament as out of it, since there is to be true Repentance in the Sacrament it self, that being the matter of it. And in reality JESUS CHRIST instituting the Sacrament, chang'd nothing of what at all Times was esteem'd necessary for true Repentance, which, as all the World knows, in its very Nature iuclosed the Love of God above all Things, that are incompatible with the Freindship of God, He only Ordain'd, out of his infinite Goodness, that the Sacrament should supply the Imperfection of that Act of the Love of God, to the end that the Conversion of Sinners might be render'd more easy Adding to it the Precept of Confession, Even as we see that in the Sacrament of Matrimony, our Blessed Lord did nothing more than raise the civil Contract which before the publishing of



the Gospel was the Essence of Marriage, to the Dignity of a Sacrament. Just so he has rais'd Penance to the Dignity of a Sacrament, without destroying any thing of its Essence.

The Council of *Trent* has defin'd nothing contrary to what has been here advanc'd as evidently appears by the History of the said Council, Publish'd by Cardinal *Palavicine*. Where the said Historian gives an Account of all that pass'd in the Congregations preparatory that preceded the 14 Session. On the contrary, the Council in the 4th. Chapter of the same Session touching Penance, speaking in these Terms, (*as to the imperfect Contrition, which is call'd Attrition, because it generally commences either with the Consideration of the Deformity of Sin, or the Fear of Hell and Punishment*) Teaches us that imperfect Contrition, necessary for the Sacrament of Penance, was call'd Attrition by Divines till the last Age; and truly with reason did they give it that name, which in its Etimologie signifies a thing *half-broken* according as *St. Thomas* observes *Supp. qu. 1. Art. 2. ad 2.* Thus this Attrition or imperfect Contrition, including, according to the Opinion of the Council, some Degree of Love, much Circumpection was us'd in explicating the Nature of it, saying it commonly proceeds from the Consideration of the Punishment, or the Deformity

formity of Sin, for the Council does not deny, as those who are of a contrary Opinion would have it, but that this imperfect Contrition does afterwards receive some Impression of the Love of God; on the contrary, this very Expression, *That it commonly begins with the Fear of Punishments*, seems plainly to insinuate the Sense of the Council, as we have here expounded it; for as much as that Attrition which does not include some Degree of Love, cannot begin otherwise than by the Fear of Punishment, &c. But it being possible for that imperfect Contrition the Council speaks of in that place, to take its Rise from a slender Motive of Love, afterwards join'd by some other supernatural Motive, which does not hinder its being still no other but Attrition, therefore the Fathers of the Council had very good Reason to make use of this Word *Commonly*, that is, Ordinarily.

The Confessors are therefore to take Care their Penitents have imperfect Contrition, and that they rest not satisfy'd with only servile Attrition, tho' otherwise very good, and particularly useful to such as make no great Account of Mortal Sins, and who at first are not easily touch'd by the Motive of Love, which they know little of, tho' they are not quite incapable of it. Another Reason why you are to proceed thus towards your Penitents, bringing them at least to an

imperfect Contrition, is, that this Opinion which requires some Degree of the Love of God, being more safe in Regard of the Sacrament, for as much as it does not expose it to the Hazard of nullity, it ought therefore to be follow'd in Practice, as it is ordain'd, at least implicitly by Innocent XI. in the Censure of the first Proposition of the 65. which he has so solemnly Condemn'd.

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## C H A P. XVI.

### *The Second Condition of Contrition.*

**T**HE second Condition of Sacramental Contrition is, that it ought to be Supernatural, that is, that it ought to have for its Motive, some reveal'd Truth, and above all, that of God's infinite goodness, for which he ought to be lov'd above all Things, and that it proceed from the Motion of the H. Ghost, which is call'd exciting Grace, for Human Motions tho' good in themselves; but proceeding from natural Effects are not sufficient for true Contrition. Now, tho' it be hard to discern with any Certainty, whether the Penitents are mov'd by Grace or Nature only, it will nevertheless be convenient here to set down some Tokens that may help make

make this Discovery, to the end that Confessors may not be deceiv'd in a Matter of such Concern. St. Paul tells us, that *Esau*, after he had sold his Birth-Right to his Brother *Jacob*, repented the Sacrilegious Bargain he had made, and Endeavour'd to do Penance with Tears, but without Success, *He found no place for Repentance*, says the Apostle, *tho' he sought it with Tears*, Heb. 12. 17. St. Thomas expounding this Place of St. Paul, says, That the Repentance of *Esau* was unprofitable because he did not lament the Sin he Committed in the Sale of his Inheritance, but the temporal Damage he sustain'd by it, *he was Afflicted* says he, *not for having sold his Birth-right, but for having lost it; so that he was troubl'd, not for the Sin he had committed, but for the loss he sustain'd*. In Epis. ad. Heb. cap. 12. lect. 3. whence the Holy Doctor draws this Inference, *It happens sometimes that we Repent our having Sinn'd, not out of Love of Justice, but out of Fear of Punishment, or some temporal Damage*.

From these Words of St. Thomas we learn, first, that, the Repentance, which has no other Motive but Fear of Pain or Punishment without passing on to the Love of Justice or Holiness, is altogether dubious, and uncertain, which is what St. Aug. expressly teaches, *What great matter is it you do*, says he, *"if you only fear Evil?"* It "is great to do no evil, and to love  
C 5 " doing



“ doing good; for a Thief fears ill,  
“ and when this fear hinders him from  
“ Robbing, he does not cease to be a  
“ Thief; for 'tis the Heart that God looks  
“ into, and not the Hand. A Wolfe  
“ comes to the Sheep fold, and strives  
“ to break in and take away some of the  
“ Flock and Worry them; the Shepherds  
“ cry out, the Dogs bark, and the Wolf  
“ can do nothing, he neither takes any  
“ away, nor kills any, however a Wolf  
“ he came, and a Wolf he went away  
“ Does he cease to be a Wolf, and be-  
“ come a Lamb, because, he could not car-  
“ ry away a Sheep, Not at all. He came  
“ Foaming with Rage, and went away  
“ Trembling with Fear, but whether he  
“ Rages or Quakes, he is still a Wolf,  
“ examine your self then and see whe-  
“ ther you abstain from doing ill, when  
“ you can do it without being punish'd,  
“ and then it is God you Fear. Here is  
“ only your self, and the Person you  
“ wrong, and God who sees you both in  
“ this State, See and Fear, it is not e-  
“ nough to say, See and Fear the Evil,  
“ you must also say Love the Good; for  
“ if it be only thro' the Fear of Hell  
“ that you do not Sin, you are not yet  
“ perfect, I must go farther yet, if it be  
“ the Fear of Hell that hinders you from  
“ doing ill, you have indeed Faith, since  
“ you believe that there will be a  
“ Judgment

“ Judgment of God: I rejoyce for your  
 “ Faith, but yet I fear your Malice. What  
 “ is the meaning hereof, but that when  
 “ you forbear to do ill thro’ Fear of Hell,  
 “ you don’t do good for the Love of  
 “ Justice. *Serm. 178. alias 19. verb. Apost.*  
 “ *St. Thomas* follows this Doctrine of *St.*  
*Aug.* when he assures us that *Antiochus*  
 did not obtain the Remission of his Sins,  
 because he only fear’d Punishment, and  
 had no Love for Justice *Antiochus*, says  
 he, *had obtain’d Pardon, if he had Truly*  
*Repented; but his Repentance was not True,*  
*because he did not Repent of his Sins, for*  
*the Love of Justice, but only thro’ Fear of*  
*Punishment which he apprehended or for*  
*the Torment of the Pain he Endur’d. In*  
*4. Sent. dist. 20. q. 1. ar. 1. ad. 1.* If  
 then you observe in Sinners Sentiments  
 of Repenance only proceeding from the  
 Consideration of the Pains of Hell;  
 do not fail to encourage them by assu-  
 ring that they come from the Holy  
 Ghost, who begins to act in them, by  
 Motions proportionable to the Condi-  
 tion of their past Life, exciting them  
 strongly to Repentance with the Memo-  
 ry of God’s Judgments, which they had  
 entirely forgot. Yet do not stop there,  
 but lead them on, placing before their  
 Eyes, the common Benefits, as well as  
 particular Graces they have receiv’d from  
 God, for which they cannot better testify  
 their

their Gratitude than by ceasing to Offend him for the Time to come: Go on then, and represent to them his infinite Goodness, which requires of us an entire Obedience and an immense Love, tho' he had no Rewards to bestow, or Punishment to inflict on us. Do not believe that the Holy Ghost (who is the Substantial Love of the Trinity, and who knocks at the Hearts of Sinners, that his Love may enter) is less dispos'd to Communicate to them the Gift of Love, than that of Fear; both the one and the other being the sole Effect of his Goodness, and the more for that to Love God, or to Fear the Punishment of Hell, only upon natural Motives, is not a proper Disposition to receive the Grace of the Sacrament.

If only the Fear of Punishments in the other Life, renders Repentance uncertain, the sole Fear of ills in this Life will render it absolutely null, because, not only the Act, but even the Object of this Second Fear is a Thing purely natural. So when a Murderer is sorry because he is Prosecuted, or a Lewd Woman is troubl'd because she is threatned with Banishment, or Whipping, 'tis manifest that neither of these Sorrows is sufficient or proper for the Sacrament.

Another

Another Consequence to be drawn from St. Thomas's Words above, is, that the Sorrow which proceeds only from some Temporal Damage caus'd by Sin, renders our Repentance Unprofitable and Fruitless. We may discover this Sort of Sorrow, First, when the Penitent is in great Confusion because his Sin is become publick. 2. When you see him sensibly Afflicted for some Temporal Loss occasion'd by his Sin, whilst at the same Time he does not seem at all concern'd for the Offence of God. 3. When he is very earnest with his Confessor to know how he shall remedy and hide the Confusion and Loss he Suffers, and does not ask Advice, how to make Satisfaction by worthy Acts of Penance, or to avoid Offending God for the Future. 4. When you find he is in no Pain for his Sins, if they are secret, and he suffers no Temporal Damage by them, and that he is only then in Trouble or shows his Sorrow, when the exterior Consequences of his Sins appear to the World. 'Tis true, God can make use of temporal Misfortunes to procure the Conversion of Sinners; and indeed he very often makes use not only of the Loss of Goods and Health, but of all other troublesome Accidents that happen, thus by the outward Effect of his Providence



Providence improving the Workings of his Grace in the Souls of many. Howsoever, in this Case are they much more concern'd for the Loss of God, than for that they have sustain'd in their Worldly Goods, which is a Token whereby to distinguish in them the Motions of Grace, from those of Nature.

It is an excellent sign that the Sorrow is Supernatural, when you see the Penitent generously labours to break those Chains which fastned him to Sin; because the Grace of Conversion being an active Grace, if you do not discover the principal Effect, which consists in a firm Resolution to forsake Sin, commonly call'd a *good Purpose* you may conclude that either the Sinner has not that Grace, which he ought however to beg earnestly of God, or that he does not Correspond as he ought; so that in neither Case he can be said to have sufficient Sorrow or Contrition. In the same manner, if the Penitent receives the Truths and Instructions which his Confessor suggests to him, and testifies a cheerful Docility to receive what is said, it is a good Sign; but on the contrary, if he contests in Time of Confession with his Ghostly Father, and every Truth appears to him a rigorous Imposition, if the Penances enjoin'd seem to him insupportable, tho' according to the Rules of the Church; what  
can.

can be then believ'd ? But that the Grace of God has not efficaciously wrought in his heart, and that there is a Necessity of a better Disposition before he is Absolv'd.

It is also a Sign that the Sorrow is not efficacious, when the Sinner seems wholly concern'd for the Fear of Damnation, which the Sight of his Sins occasions, and yet does not Labour and use his utmost Endeavours to rise out of them, so that you'll sometimes find, they Weep, Groan, and have weak Desires to be Converted; but all this holds no longer, than whilst their Mind is agitated with this Trouble, which being once over, all those Appearances of Sorrow are gone. When Sorrow is real and efficacious it Penetrates into the Will, which preserves it, Independant of the Motions that happen in the inferiour and sensitive Part of the Soul.

CHAP

## C H A P. XVII.

*The Fourth Fault before Confession.*

**T**HE Fourth Fault in Penitents before Confession, is that they take no Care to provide themselves with Confessors capable to direct them, of exemplary Lives and of a Christian Prudent Conduct; on the contrary they rather enquire after such as are most unfit and incapable; such as do not require of their Penitents that they correct their Habitual Sins, and quit the Dangerous Occasions they are in, before they give them Absolution; such as rarely oblige them to make Restitution to their Neighbours of their Goods, or Honour, who doe not enjoin them any medicinal Penances as the Council of *Trent* Ordains, and who do not take Care to search into the Causes and Circumstances of their Sins, whereby they may rightly understand the true State of the Penitents Conscience. In short Sinners generally apply themselves to such Confessors, not only because they are easy and give them no Trouble, but because they help by  
their

their loose Morals to excuse their Sins, thus leaving them to a false Peace of Conscience, which like a Spiritual Lethargy leads them to Death; and yet these Confessors and Penitents ought to know, that the Confessor is only a Judge-delegate of *JESUS CHRIST*, the Sovereign Judge; and so cannot give Sentence in the Holy Tribunal contrary to his Orders who has Commission'd him; which are set down in Holy Writ, and Prescrib'd by the Rules of the Church, for the due Administration of this Sacrament, This occasion'd St. *Gregory* the Great to say, That the Confessors Absolution is not good, nor of any Effect, if it is not conform to the Judgment of *CHRIST*, who is the Sovereign Judge, otherwise these Sinners believing they have Receiv'd Absolution in due Form, will perceive when 'tis too late, that is, at the Hour of Death, and at their particular Judgement, that they still continued guilty of Treason against the Divine Majesty, as a Punishment, for their having sought such Confessors as would Flatter and Please them, and Dissemble Vices; which could only proceed from Corrupted Hearts, rather contriving to Cherish than to be Cur'd of their Concupiscences and Sins, so that we may apply, to them that which the Prophet *Isaias* said to the Sinners of his Time,  
That



That they said to the Seers (so in the Old Law they call'd the Prophets, who were the Interpreters of the Will of God) See not, and to them that behold, Behold us not, those Things that are right speak unto us pleasant Things, see errors unto us. cap. 30. 10. They ought not then to think it strange if when they think themselves safe, they even then find they are overwhelm'd with the Weight of Gods Justice, according to the Words of St. Paul, for when they shall say Peace and Security; then suddain Destruction shall come upon them, as the Pains to her, that is, with Child, and they shall not escape. 1 Theff. 5. 3.

These same Confessors and Sinners ought to know, that a Ghostly Father is a Spiritual Physician, who endeavours to cure the Wounds of the Soul. He must therefore imitate the Conduct and Practice of the ablest Physicians, who spare no Prescriptions, nor Remedies, tho' never so bitter, nor the Pain of Cauteries, and Incisions, when the Cure of the Patient requires it. This is what St Cyprian teaches us in those Words, which well deserve to be here inserted: *He would be a very wretched Surgeon who should not go to the Bottom of the Wound, for Fear of putting the Patient to Pain, and who should encrease the mortal Corruption of the Wound by not labouring*

bouring to remove it. The Wound must be lay'd open, it must be Scarify'd, and cutting away all the dead Flesh, the sharpest Remedies must be apply'd. Let the Patient cry, and complain never so much, in a short Time he will change his Complaints into Thanks. when he sees himself cur'd. Serm. de Lapsis.

We have already observ'd, that Contrition necessarily includes a sincere and firm Resolution to Commit Sin no more, especially those which are confess'd, since it cannot be said, that he is truly Penitent, who still retains the Will to do that which he repents of. Bnt because there may be great mistakes as to this point, as well on the Penitents Side, as the Confessors, it will be necessary to explain our selves more at large as follows.

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## C H A P. XIII.

*The fifth Fault before Confession.*

THE Fifth Fault of Penitents before Confession, is want of a true Purpose and sincere Resolution of abstaining for ever from all mortal Sins, particularly those they are most guilty of. Many imagine, that if they form this Purpose and Resolution, and in general Terms, say, they'll offend God no more, 'tis Sufficient; but this is a mistake, for Sins consider'd thus in general, and abstractly; make no great Impression, nor can they by this know the true State of their Hearts in Regard to their Sins. They must therefore look into them more narrowly and particularly, if they do not design to deceive themselves; then will they discover the Sentiments of their Hearts be satisfy'd whether they are effectually dispos'd to Renounce that Passion which till then has led it away; whether they really design to quit that Occasion, which has made them fall so often; whether they will break the Chains of Concupiscence, which have deceiv'd them, and made

made them prefer the Opinions of loose Morality before the uniform Doctrine and Common Sentiments of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church. Now if the Sinner upon this Examen finds a Conflict within himself, rais'd by various Thoughts and Difficulties, which hinder him from making a firm Resolution of applying a solid Remedy in particular to such Sins as we have now spoken of, you may conclude for certain that he has only some slender Inclination to Renounce them; that is, he would willingly leave the Sin, were it not Necessary at the same Time to quit the Pleasure he enjoys, or the Advantage he reaps by it, and wanting the Courage so to do, he still remains unhappily Link'd to his Sins.

Sin makes two Impressions on the Heart of a Sinner, it withdraws him from his Creator, and settles his Affection on the Creature: Repentance on the contrary is to withdraw him from the Creature, and make him return to God his Creator. The first is done, by detesting his Sins in particular; the second by purposing efficaciously to observe the Law of God, which forbids the said Sins. If then the Sinner does not find himself strong enough to form these Designs, he must have a Care how he trusts to a passing and general Resolution; he must have Recourse to  
Tears,



Tears, good Works, and Prayers ; remembering that God, as the Council of *Trent* teaches ; does not command impossible Things, but on the contrary his Commandments are so many Advices given us to do what we can with the Assistance of his ordinary Grace, and to beg more powerful Assistance for those Things which we are not able yet to perform, with Assurance that we shall obtain it, and be enabled to fulfil them : *God, says the Council, Does not command impossible Things, but in commanding, he minds us to do what we can, and ask what we cannot do, and he helps us to the end we may effectually do it.* Sess. 6. can. 11 de Justif.

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## C H A P. XIX.

### *The Sixth Fault before Confession.*

**T**HE Sixth Fault before Confession relates particularly to habitual Sinners, who Confess very seldom, and generally present themselves at such Times, when all Confessors are taken up with other Penitents, as in the Holy Week, or at some other great Festival, which is certainly a great Abuse ; for it is almost

most impossible, that then the Confessor should do his Duty, unless he neglects others, which must be a Disappointment: For besides that the Accounts which these habitual Sinners bring to Confession are long, they are also generally so intricate and difficult, that it often happens there is a Necessity of obliging them to make a general Confession of all their Life, or at least of some Years. For this reason it is, that Pastors should give notice to their People before hand, for remedying this Disorder, advising them not to defer their Annual Confession till *Easter*, which is of Precept, but to make it towards the beginning of Lent, which is set a part on purpose for penitential Duties, as it was formerly practis'd, *They must come to Confession, not at the End of Lent, which is an Abuse introduc'd, but at the Beginning, according to the ancient laudable Custom,* says Card. Bellarmin in his Explication of a Place in the Council of Trent, Sess. 14. 5. *de refer. St. Charles* in his Instruction upon the Sacrament of Penance gives the same Advice to the Confessors and Penitents in his Diocess of *Milan*, especially to such as confess seldom; because those few Days about *Easter* being taken up with Divine Offices, and a multitude of those who present themselves to Communion may  
be

be proper for dispatching short Reconciliations; but not for long Confessions. If then the Confessors meets with any Persons on those Days, who require much Time, either for making an exact Confession of their Sins, or because they ought to repeat former Confessions which appear to be null, let them put off such to a more proper Time, and give them all the Leisure requisite for making a good Confession, since it is not Lawful to omit any thing that may be necessary for the Validity of the Sacrament, on Pretence of Conveniency of the other Penitents, who are to Confess and Communicate at that Time; for as much as the divine Precept on which the Integrity of Confession is grounded, ought to take place of the Precepts of the Church touching Annual Confession and Pascal Communion. This Advice particularly concerns Country Curates, who are alone, and have only a Vicar to assist them in hearing Confessions, because they may often find themselves in the like Circumstances, and must of Necessity require a longer Time, than that Season will allow of, especially when there is but one or two Confessors, and a vast Number of Penitents. Thus far of the Faults before Confession.

## CHAP. XX.

*Of the Faults in Confession.*

## The First:

**T**HE Faults committed in Confession, are of several Sorts, we will take Notice of the principal and most material. The First, is, of such as say a great deal in Confession, which should not be said, and omit that which ought to be said. This is very frequent with some, who tell long Stories of Injuries they have receiv'd from others, of Troubles in their Family, particular Contests, domestick, or foreign, in which they are concern'd and by such Impertinences confound Things, so that 'tis difficult to find, what Share of Sin belongs to the Penitent. This Fault is most common in Women and Ignorant Persons. The Confessor is to bear with, and at the same Time Instruct them Charitable, how they are to Confess, that their Confession may be Sincere and Plain, which it will be when they lay aside the Superfluous, and tell only what is Necessary.



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## CHAP. XXI.

### *The second Fault in Confession.*

**T**HE Second Fault in Confession, is, Want of Humility ; that is, when the Penitent instead of accusing himself of his Sins, excuses them ; laying the Fault upon the Violence of the Temptation, or upon the Person who gave the Provocation, which was too Injurious to be born with, upon divers Conjunctions which were for him a Kind of Fatality. Now this Method of excusing ones Self, is the certain way not to receive the Pardon of Sins, but to burthen ones Conscience more and more, St. Bernard, says, *This is rather a Defence than a Confession, and so far from appeasing of God that it provokes Him.* Ser. 6. in Cant.

## C H A P. XXII.

*The Third Fault in Confession.*

**T**HE Third Fault is of those who Confess their Sins, as if they were telling a Story, without any manner of Compunction, rather to discharge their Memory than their Conscience. This Fault is very common among Penitents, and proceeds partly from their Ignorance, and partly from the Negligence of Confessors, many of whom are satisfy'd with hearing the Sins, and will give themselves no farther Trouble: Whereas they ought to defer their Absolution to such sort of Penitents in whom there appears so great an Indifferency for offending God, and therefore they are to be Exhorted for some Time to bewail their Sins, and grieve for their Miseries before they approach the Tribunal of Confession, hoping by means of Prayers, Tears, and good Works, to obtain of God the Grace and Spirit of a True Compunction, *Hugh of St. Victor*, has admirably well observ'd this Fault, when he says, *There are some, who come to tell their Sins to a Confessor, without any mo-*

tion of Fear, or Love of God, only to keep up a Custom, imagining that if they say only the Words, they shall be Absolv'd from their Sins. Confessors are to say to such Persons, go first and bewail your Sins, and then come to Confession, de Sacram. lib. 2. part. 14. cap. 1. in fine.

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## C H A P. XXIII.

### *The Fourth Fault in Confession.*

**T**HE Fourth Fault, is Want of Discretion in Penitents which requires, that they do not discover Names, or Persons concern'd; when they can sufficiently explicate their own Sins without it. This is the Doctrine of the Antient Fathers, Doctors, and Casuists, among which Number St. Raymond, speaks thus, The Confession is to be peculiar to him that makes it, so that he accuse himself, and not others. For to declare others Faults looks more like defaming of ones Neighbour, than a Charitable Correction. Tho' this Rule ought generally to be observ'd, yet in some Circumstances an Allowance must be given and an Exception made, especially in Cases of Incest, or the like; for then it cannot be said,  
that

that his Design is to discover his Neighbours Sin, or to do him an Injury, but only to discharge himself of his own, not being able to do it otherwise. St. Raymond. Lib. 3. §. 24. St. Thomas, apud. 12. ad fratrem Gerardum q. 6. and St. Bonaventure in 4 Sent. dist. 2. q. 3. p. 2. An. 1. Teaches the same Doctrine and St. Antoninus adds p. 3. Tit. 14. cap. 19 §. 11. That the Penitent may discover to his Confessor his Accomplice for some other good Intention, not to discover her, for discovery sake, or to excuse himself, but that the Confessor may pray for her, or use Means to correct her by some secret Admonition. But this Rule in discovering the Accomplice, when you cannot, without it, declare your own Sins, admits still, of two Exceptions. The First, is, when a Penitent can conveniently go to another Confessor, who is not known to the Accomplice; in this Case, he is oblig'd to go to a Stranger, that so the other Party may not be known. The Second Exception, is when a Priest cannot in Confession declare his own Sin without discovering the Sin of his Penitent, which he heard in Confession; In this Case also the Priest is oblig'd; either to find another Confessor, who knows not the Penitent, or to defer his Confession, but if he can do neither the one, or the other



in some pressing Necessity, 'tis better to omit for that one time speaking of that Sin, the Seal of Confession being of stricter Obligation, than the material Integrity of Confession. *Cabassut. lib. 3. cap. 11. n. 3.*

## C H A P. XXIV.

### *The Fifth Fault in Confession.*

**T**HE Fifth Fault in Penitents, is, Want of Docility, whence 'tis to be fear'd there are few Confessors who discharge their Duty as they ought, because there are very few who have Courage enough to perform their Ministry. Penitents are to be Exhorted to submit entirely to the Advice, Council and Direction, of their Confessors, otherwise they will plainly discover, that they are less careful of the Salvation of their Souls, than of their Health: For there is no Sick Person (unless Light Headed) who ever offers to contradict his Physician, or refuses to depend entirely on his advice and submit to his Prescriptions, whether these are for Prevention, or for curing of a Distemper; but we shall have another Occasion to touch upon this Subject hereafter.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XXV.

*Of the Faults after Confession.*

**A**S for the Faults, Penitents Commit after Confession, they are of two sorts: The First, is not performing the Penance enjoyn'd, and the other a constant Method of living as they did before, without the least Amendment, perhaps in hopes of having Absolution as often as they please, but as these Faults regard the main Body of Confession, as well as Absolution, and Satisfaction, we will remit speaking of them till we come to treat particularly of these three Duties. At present we will explicate in few Words the Method of making a good Confession; which being easy and useful, we hope all Penitents will be Faithful to make use of it.

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## CHAP. XXVI.

*Of a good Confession, and how to make it well.*

**W**Hen Penitents come to Confession, represent to them (unless they be such as are well instructed) that they are before the Tribunal of *JESUS CHRIST*, whose Ministers you are, tho' infinitely unworthy of such a sublime Dignity; that this Tribunal is all Mercy, provided they sincerely repent of their Sins, make a firm Resolution never to fall into them again, and that they Confess them Faithfully under the Secret and Seal of Confession, which is the greatest and most inviolable of all Secrets in the World. Thus will you excite in them a full Confidence in God for obtaining Remission of their Sins, and in you for sincerely laying their Conscience open.

After this Preamble, you shall mind them, to ask the Benediction in these Words. *Bless me Father, because I have Sinned. Benedi&nt mibi pater quia peccavi,* to which you reply in the Words of the Church. *Dominus sit in corde tuo, et in labijs*

labijs tuis, &c. that is, Our Lord be in your Heart and in your Lips that you may truly Confess all your Sins, &c. In the Name. After which they are to say the First Part of the Confiteor, till those Words Thro' my Fault, and if they can say it, you must help them. Then you are to ask them such Questions, as you think necessary, and which shall be set down hereafter, and if there be nothing to hinder them from beginning their Confession, let them tell their Sins without any interruption, unless it is to know the Number, or necessary Circumstances of thir Sins, deferring to the End of their Confession, what convenient Advice, or Remedies you shall think proper for them, lest you occasion any Confusion, or Disturbance in their Mind, or Memory. Then after they have ended their Confiteor, and you have said *Misereatur*, and *Indulgentiam*: You make use of that Occasion to lay before them with great Sweetness, Tenderness, and Charity, the Infinite Goodness of God, who has expected their Repentance so long, even to that Moment; that they ought to be careful for the future not to abuse so much Goodness. That Death is certain, and the Hour of it uncertain, so that they will expose themselves to evident Danger of Damnation, if they continue to commit Sin; that there is no



Happiness, we ought to value or esteem so much, as a good Conscience, since that brings us to the Possession and Enjoyment of God, who is the Sovereign Good and the Author of all Happiness; that of Consequence the greatest Evil that can happen to Man is to loose the Peace of a good Conscience; which happens as often as he falls into Mortal Sin; that in Truth, our Nature is deprav'd and Weak; but that the Grace of God enables it to do Good and avoid Evil, and is never wanting if we are Faithful to him. That they seriously consider and reflect what it is to have God for their Enemy, without whose Assistance, we are not able to procure the least Good. By these short Considerations, or such like, you will not only move your Penitents to a Sorrow and Detestation of their Sins, but you will also Contribute towards helping them to make an Act of Contrition; which you must cause them to do, in case they have not done it before, and it frequently happens they have not, as I have observ'd above; Then say to them what you Judge proper for the good of their Souls, prescribing to them several Remedies against their Sins, and particularly against such, as have been till then most Predominant and Habitual; and these Sort of Remedies, are call'd Medicinal

dicinal Penances; Enjoin them moreover by way of Satisfactory Penance, works proportionable to the Sins they have Confess'd, and according to the Condition and Circumstances of the Person; but we shall hereafter speak more at large of this double Penance. To conclude, if you find them well Dispos'd to Receive Absolution, and you have no Reason to defer it, give it them in the Form prescrib'd in the Roman Ritual, adding at the End of it, the Prayer, *Passio Domini nostri*, &c. which indeed never ought to be omitted without urgent Necessity, because it is of Virtue to raise the good Works we do of our selves to a higher and more Efficacious Degree of Satisfaction by Virtue of the Sacrament, as St. Thomas Teaches, who speaks thus, *The Satisfactory Works which a Penitent Performs, that were not expressly enjoyn'd him, receive great Advantage for the Expiation of past Crimes, by the general Injunction the Priest makes, saying, Quicquid boni feceris, sit tibi in Remissionem peccatorum*, whence he concludes, *That in this Respect, this sort of Satisfaction is Sacramental, in as much as by Virtue of the Keys it contributs to the Expiation of Faults committed.* Quodlibet. 3. q. 13. art. 1. Thus much may Suffice to shew you in short, and as it were at one Glance of the Eye, all that the Sacrament

ment of Penance includes. We shall now speak of each of those Actions, we have noted down, for your better Instruction.

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## CHAP. XXVII.

### *Of the Questions to be put to the Penitents before Confession.*

THE Questions to be put to the Penitent, after he has said the *Confiteor*, and before Confession are several, according to the Diversity of Persons and Times, Part of them to be made to some, and all of them to others, according to the Rules of Prudence and Discretion. The First Question you ask the Penitent, is to know what Diocess he is off, supposing you know him not; for if he comes out of another Diocess to get Absolution of some Case reserv'd to his own Bishop, thus seeking to withdraw himself from the Order and Discipline of his Diocess, which may easily be known; if it appears he comes expressly for this Purpose, the Confessor in this Case must send him away without going further, because he has no Power to

to absolve from that Case, not reserv'd in the Diocess where he is, as it is expressly declar'd by the Holy See, *Constitut. Superna Clem. x. §. 7.* Instead of this Question in *England*, if the Penitents be Strangers, you ask them, who their Confessor is? And why they come to you? Secondly, You are to ask, how long it is since their last Confession. this Enquiry will Contribute to your easier finding out the Number of their Sins, and gives you an Opportunity, of representing to the Penitent, what ill Consequences follow deferring his Confession too long, supposing he is under those Circumstances. Thirdly, whether he has perform'd the Penance enjoin'd him in his former Confessions? If he has fail'd in this Point, and it be the first Time, you must make him promise to perform it as soon as possible, but if he has neglected it often, you must bid him go and perform his Penances, and then come to Confession. For this sort of negligence, shews, that such a Penitent had not had a firm Will of satisfying God for the Offences committed against his Divine Majesty, which is no less an essential Part of Contrition, whether perfect or imperfect, than a firm Resolution never to offend more. 4. You shall ask, how much Time your Penitent employ'd in recollecting his Sins, by which you will



will be better able to Judge whether he has sufficiently examin'd his Conscience; as also how long he has been imploring of God the Grace of Repentance, and raising in himself a supernatural Sorrow for all his Sins, and particularly such as are Mortal. If you perceive that the Penitent comes without due Preparation, you must ask him, whether he us'd to do so formerly; and if he owns it, you must Charitably inform him, that he is oblig'd to repeat those Confessions, in which for Want of examining his Conscience, or doing it very slightly, he has expos'd himself to manifest Danger of not Confessing all his Mortal Sins; and that having taken no Time to excite himself to Contrition, but only those few Moments whilst he was at Confession, it is to be fear'd that he obtain'd it not then. It is true that in this last Case it is not convenient to raise Scruples in the Penitents concerning past Confessions; for as much as it may be reasonably suppos'd, that their Confessors took Care that they had sufficient Contrition, by which, throughout all this Instruction we also mean Imperfect Contrition, commonly call'd Attrition, according to the Doctrine, and Intention of the Holy Council of *Trent*.

When you find ignorant Person guilty of these two Faults, *viz.* Want of Examining

amin, and Contrition, you must teach them what they are to do to Remedy it, and appoint them a convenient Time to prepare themselves, that you may be Morally assur'd they are duly dispos'd. Fifthly, If you have reason to doubt that your Penitent does not know the Things necessary for his Eternal Salvation, examine in the first Place, whether that Ignorance is blame worthy or no, and Secondly, whether it is of Things necessary to be known, as means of Salvation, call'd *Necessitate medij*, or only necessary as of Precept, *Necessitate precepti*. The First, are the Misteries of the Holy Trinity and Incarnation, Passion, and Death of our Saviour *JESUS CHRIST*, who suffered to deliver us from Hell, and to give us Heaven and Eternal Life. For these Things no Man must be ignorant of upon Pain of Damnation, and there is no Excuse for this, because this Necessity of Means is absolute, as appears in Baptism, without which there is no Salvation; so that if you find any Penitents so Ignorant, you are either to send them away, till they are Instructed, or if there is any urgent Necessity of giving them the Sacrament, you must endeavour to Instruct them the best you can, and Teach them to make Acts of Faith upon those Mysteries abovemention'd, without which they are not capable.

ble of Absolution. The other particulars, which are only of Necessity of Precept, are the Lords Prayer, the Angelical Salutation, the Belief, the Ten Commandments, and the Precepts of the Church, which are to be found in Catechisms, If the Ignorance of these be Gross and Wilful out of pure Negligence and Want of Care of being Instructed by their Pastors, or others when they might, you must inform them of their Duty in this Particular, and advise them to Confess this Neglect and to specify how long it has continu'd, as being a grievous Offence; if Pastors do not fail to signify to the Faithful the Obligation they ly under of being Instructed. Therefore if there be no other pressing Reasons for giving them Absolution, it is better to defer it till they are sufficiently Instructed.

Sixthly, you are to ask the Penitent, whether he Confess'd all his Mortal Sins in his former Confessions; if he has not done it, you must ask the Reason, whether it was out of Shame, or for Want of examining themselves sufficiently, for in both these Cases he is oblig'd to repeat the same Confessions; and if you find it was out of Bashfulness and Knowingly that he conceal'd a Mortal Sin, he must also accuse himself of all the Sacrilegious Communions, he has receiv'd in that State.

Seventhly

Seventhly, You shall ask your Penitents Age, which may serve for knowing the Number of his Sins, and whether he is oblig'd to keep Fasting Days, or not Eighthly, You shall also enquire into his Calling, Condition and Employment, whether a Judge, Lawyer, Physician, Apothecary, Merchant, Artist, Tradesman, Married, Single, Priest, or Religious: Because besides the general Questions that are put to every one, there are particular Enquiries to be made of every Person, there being no State, or Condition, but what has its respective Obligations, the violating of which gives Birth to divers Kinds of Sins, which the Confessor ought to know, unless he will render himself guilty in the Sight of God of another Man's Sins, for the Physician cannot cure the Distemper he knows nothing of. Ninthly, If the Penitent be of the Number of those, who Confess Seldom, or but once a Year, those Persons being commonly loaded with grievous Sins, they ought to be ask'd, whether they are not under any Censure, or reserv'd Cases; because having not Faculties to absolve from such Sins, you may save the Penitent the trouble and Shame of Confessing his other Crimes, and without further trouble send him immediately away to some other who has the Power. Tenthly, and Lastly, You ought to ask  
your



your Penitent, whether his other Confessors have not enjoind him some particular Things, as making Restitution of their Neighbours Goods or Reputation; being reconcil'd to their Enemies, and removing from the immediate Occasions of Sin; for if the Penitent has not perform'd what was requir'd of him for some considerable Time, and after having been since, twice, or thrice at Confession, you are to send him away, and deny him Absolution, till he has satisfy'd the Obligation.

When you have fully understood the present State of your Penitent, you must encourage him (by such motives as are noted above) to make a sincere and plain Confession of all his Sins; and if there be no absolute Necessity to ask any Questions in the Time of his Confession, either for the better Understanding the matter of Fact, or for knowing the Circumstances, which change, or notably aggravate the Nature of the Sin, which the Penitent does not sufficient explain, you are not to interrupt him for Fear of discomposing, and putting him out, which may make him forget the Rest of his Sins, as it often happens by Experience. But if you are oblig'd to ask him any Question, do it with all the Sweetness and Calmness imaginable, without showing the least Surprise, tho' you should

should hear the most enormous of Sins, lest you should divert the Penitent from his Design of opening his Heart to you; and you must take care that you do not either by your Actions, or Looks, give any Sign by which those who are near, may perceive that he accuses himself of any thing, which Troubles you.

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## C H A P. XXVIII.

### *Other Directions to Confessors.*

**A** Gain, when the Penitent has concluded what he has to say, if you doubt his Confession is not so entire as it ought to be, either because he is Ignorant and ill Instructed and therefore wants Help to find out his Sins; or that he does not accuse himself of any Sins belonging to his particular Condition, tho' he lives after an Indifferent common Manner; in these Cases, you are to ask him some Questions, according as Prudence shall suggest, one of the Rules whereof is, never to examine any Person but only upon Sins, which are commonly known to all Men, for Fear lest the Penitent should learn any ill Things, which

which he knew not before. In Matters of Impurity, ask no more than what is precisely necessary to know the Quality of the Sin, for otherwise you will bring your self and Penitent into Danger, according to the Observation of St. Thomas, *It may happen, says he, that the Confessor making these Enquiries (which are not Necessary) may expose himself and Penitent, and that so those who search into Iniquity, will fall themselves in the search they make,* In 4. Sent. dist. 19. Prudence also requires that you should ask few Questions of Sick Persons, in Extremity, and rather that you enjoin them to make their Confessions more exact, if they recover.

*The Examen by the Ten Commandments.*

The way to help those Penitents, who know not how to find out their Mortal Sins, is, to examin them according to the Order of the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments; because all Sins are reduc'd to them: The first Commands us, to Adore one only God, the Sins therefore that are committed against this, are Sins against Faith, Hope, and Charity, Virtues that have God for their Object; Sins against Religion, which gives  
to

to God the True Worship due to his Divine Majesty, &c. The Second, Forbids Swearing in Vain, which includes all Oaths against Truth and Justice, and without Necessity; without which three Conditions, Oaths are Unlawful. On this Occasion, Confessors are exhorted to use all possible Diligence to root out Perjuries, which are now a days grown so common; and the True Cause of this, 'tis to be fear'd, is Want of Instruction: How many without Scruple Swear false in Cases of Tryals and upon ordinary Occasions, when they ignorantly imagin they do no Harm to any. You are therefore to represent to all your Penitents, First, that by Swearing false, they do a great Injury to God, for whoever is guilty of Perjury, calling God to Witness a Falstiy, does the same thing as if he believ'd God capable of affirming an Untruth which is a most Horrible Sin. Secondly, That a false Oath wounds Justice, in a great Degree, deposing falsely against it, and is the Reason, why Magistrates cannot Administer it, to the great Damage of the Publick; whose good ought to be prefer'd in all Cases before that of particulars. Neither is it permitted to Swear false to save ones own Life; no more than 'tis allow'd to take away a Mans Life, to save a Beasts. For Faith Teaches us, that the Life of



a Soul is without Comparifon, more noble than that of the Body, fince the Life of the Soul is the Holy Ghost who dwels in it, and is remov'd by Mortal Sin, that is, as often as a Man breaks the Law of God in any important matter; fuch as a falfe Oath, certainly is, in which, all Divines generally admit nothing can be Inconfiderable, or Venial, whensoever a Man Swears falfe; becaufe Truth being indivifible, it is always True, whatsoever the matter is, that God, who is unchangeable Truth, is taken to Witnefs to a Falfhood. The Judges would not give an Oath to Criminals who are upon Life and Death, if they believ'd it was permitted to Swear falfe, becaufe then, this would be of no Ufe to make them Confefs the Truth, and would only prove a Vicious and ufelefs Formality; yet they make them Swear, becaufe they know that according to the Law of *JESUS CHRIST*, a Christian ought to prefer God before his Life, and rather love to loofe this, than his only and eternal Good, according to St. *Auguftin's* Words, *That a Christian upon thefe Occafions, ought to choofe rather to Dye in the Love of God, than to live in his Difpleafure and Anger*, Tract. 51. in *Johann*. But perhaps he who thus forfwears himfelf, may fay, If it be a Sin, I will Confefs it, and ftill I fhall have  
fav'd

fav'd my Life. To this you must answer him, That it is not sufficient to Confess his Sins for obtaining of Pardon, unless he have a True and Supernatural Sorrow for having offended God: And this depending on an efficacious Grace, which is a free Gift, how can any Man promise it himself so easily, when he has knowingly and deliberately, had the Boldness to Affront God, and in some Measure insult his Mercy. All this has a particularly Regard to the Necessities of our Diocess. We must add, That 'tis not only a Perjury to Swear false, but also not to keep a Solemn Promise, made upon Oath. The Third Commandment relates to the observing of Festivals, the Sins committed against it are working upon those Days, Merchandising, &c; and omitting without pressing Necessity to here Mass upon Festivals of Precept. The Fourth Commands, Honouring our Parents, to which are reduc'd all the Sins committed against them, in not giving them that Respect and Obedience which is due; in not assisting and serving them in their Wants. To which also are added the Sins of Parents towards their Children, to whom they owe a suitable Education, good Example, and a sufficient and reasonable Maintenance. In this Commandment are also contain'd the Sins of Superiors both Ecclesiastical

Ecclesiastical and Civil towards those who are subject to them, as also the Sins of Inferiors, towards their Superiors ; upon which Occasion, the Penitent may be interrogated upon the general Observation of the Precepts of the Church. Under this Head also are included the Sins of Husbands and Wives, who owe one another Love, Respect, Maintenance, and Fidelity ; and in a word the Sins, of all Sorts of States, since there are none but what consist of Superiors and Inferiors.

To the Fifth Commandment, which forbids killing, are reduc'd all the Sins against Charity ; among which Enmities being the chief and most considerable, you ought therefore to enquire of your Penitents, how long their Hatred has continued against their Neighbour, what was the Causes and the Consequences of it. The Continuance is requisite to be known, to the end, you may the better find out the Number of their Sins ; because the Precept of not hating our Neighbour, being Negative, obliges always, and at all times. Whence it follows, that he who has entertain'd Enmity in his Heart for a Year, will be guilty of a greater Number of Sins, than he who has only kept it a Month ; because, during so long a Time, he must doubtless have committed several Acts of the

the same Sin, with some Interruption. It is also very useful to know the Causes of the Enmity, as well to apply proper Remedies, as to discover, if they be not an immediate Occasion of the Hatred they entertain, as generally speaking, all Law Suits and Processes are; for in these Cases, if the Confessor cannot positively hope that the Penitent will abstain from hating his Neighbour he has a Quarrel or Controversy with, he ought to defer giving him Absolution till the Suit is ended, and the Quarrel compos'd. The effects and Consequences of Hatred are of several sorts, so that in order to make the Examen more orderly, it will be proper to reduce them to certain Heads; and the exterior Senses being as it were so many Ministers and Executors of that Hatred, which is in the Heart, you may follow them in the Examen you are to make one after another, as for instance, upon the Sense of Feeling you may ask whether the Penitent has beaten his Enemy, or caus'd him to be beaten; or done him any other Mischief, as burning his House, killing his Horses, or other Cattle belonging to him; in which Cases he is oblig'd to make full Reparation of the Damage done. *Secondly*, As to the Tongue, whether he has spoke ill of him, or given him injurious Language; in the first Case, he is bound to  
E restore



restore his Reputation, and the same in the second, if he has given him contumelious Language in the Presence of others. In Relation to the Hearing, whether he has taken Pleasure to hear his Adversary ill spoken of, or given Occasion to others to speak to his Disadvantage. For the Sight, whether he has avoyded his Company and Conversation, especially, if Relations, or Neighbours; because among such there ought to be a more frequent Intercourse of common Civilities. Lastly, you may examin him touching the Will, whether he has not taken Pleasure to hear, that his Enemy is fallen into some Misfortune, or Affliction, or at least, whether he has not wish'd, that Misfortunes should befall him; and how often. As for other Sins against Charity, they may be found in the Table of Sins, and in your ordinary Manuals, as, refusing to give Alms to those, who are in Want, &c. Which the Shortness of this Instruction will not allow to enter into the Particulars of.

The Sixth Commandment against Luxury, comprehends all the Sins, belonging to that Vice, which are also to be met with in the Tables of Sins, where you will find several Species of them. For the present, we have already observ'd, that there is Danger to be apprehended both to the Confessors and Penitents, in enquiries into this Particular, unless where

it is absolutely necessary to know the Species of the Sin, or to discover some Circumstance which renders it remarkably grievous; as for Example in the Case of Incest, in the first Degrees of Consanguinity, and therefore we will stay no longer upon this Subject. We must only put you in mind, to take Care, your Penitents fail not to Confess the Sins of Impurity, they have committed by Thoughts and Desires; for Experience shows that generally among the ordinary People, there are few that accuse themselves of this sort of Sins: In so much that when able Confessors examin them upon this Point, most of them seem to be surpris'd, as if it were a matter they had never heard of before, which is a Sign, that many Confessors do not discharge their Duty in this Particular. The Seventh Commandment, which forbids doing any Injury to our Neighbour in his Goods, includes all Sins that are contrary to Justice, which requires that every one should have his own: This is a copious Subject, and a Point which contains many hard Cases to decide, Covetousness having found so many specious Pretexts to disguise and cover it self, that the ablest Divines are sometimes at a Loss to discover what is Right and Justice in this Case. It is therefore absolutely necessary that Confessors

fors apply themselves to the Study of the Treatises *De Jure et de Justitia*, to enable themselves to discharge the Obligation incumbent on them in the Tribunal of Penance. And to excite them the more, they are to remember, that if through Negligence, or Ignorance, they wrongfully oblige their Penitents to Restitution, or discharge them from it, they will be oblig'd to repair the Damage they have occasion'd, either to the Penitent, or to whom the Restitution was really due. Wherefore when they happen to doubt of any Case, let them defer the Resolution of it, to another Confession, after taking the Penitents Word, that he will stand to the Decision; and in the mean while, let them study the Case, or Consult some able Divines about it. To the Eighth Commandment, which forbids bearing False Witness, are reduc'd all the Sins of the Tongue, by which we injure our Neighbour, and tho' this Divine Precept expressly Condemns only those Lyes which are Prejudicial to our Neighbour, whether in his Honour, or Goods, yet as the Sixth Commandment forbids under the Sin of Adultery all Sins of Luxury, so the Eighth under bearing False Witness includes all Sins of the Tongue relating to it, as Detractions and Opprobrious Language, which are two sorts of Sins,

Sins, that must be nicely distinguish'd; for when a Man has revil'd his Neighbour Falsly, upbraiding him with some Vice, or Fault, the Offence is then much greater, and he is oblig'd to make Reparation by Contradicting, or Excusing it in Publick, or in Private, according to the Circumstances of the Injury; whereas for repairing the Damage caus'd by Detraction, it is sufficient to unsay it in the Presence of those Persons as heard it, in such manner as is Prescrib'd by approv'd Authors, who have treated of that Subject. There is another evil very Dangerous in Conversations, and which few scruple at, and yet is very necessary to be remedy'd in the Tribunal of Confession, which is a bitter way of rallying, by which our Neighbour is mock'd and turn'd into Ridicule, and this St. Thomas Judges to be more Offensive, than even reproachful Language, because it expresses a greater Contempt of ones Neighbour, *These Ralleries*, says he, *are Mortal Sins and more grievous than reproachful, or Injurious Words; for he who gives opprobrious Language, seems to regard anothers Misfortunes in a Serious Manner; but the Rallyer makes a Jest of it, which Denotes a greater Contempt, and a more malignant Design in giving the Affront.* 2. 2. q. 75. Act. 2. in cap. And the same Doctor adds, that of all



Malicious and Satyrical Railleries the most malignant, are those which are made on Vertue, and on Persons who make Profession of it; the Reason he gives, is this, *Because Honour and Respect is due to Virtue, as its Recompence, and therefore such Railleries are most pernicious, because they divert Men from well doing, which they would otherwise be inclin'd to, but that the Apprehension of being rally'd hinders them.* As to the Ninth and Tenth Commandments, all those Thoughts and Desires are forbid which relate to the Things we are commanded not to do, in the Fifth and Sixth Commandments, which Confessors must remember to enquire into, when they examin them upon those Matters.

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## CHAP. XXIX.

### *Some Advices to be given after Confession.*

**A**FTER having thus discover'd the State of your Penitents Conscience, and being morally assur'd of the Integrity of their Confession, and after having said the two Prayers of *Misereatur*, and *Indulgentiam*, in order to dispose

pose them, by those Prayers to conceive a hearty Sorrow for their Sins, and to receive with Submission, the Advice, Remedies and Penance you shall judge most proper and convenient ; then you may begin to represent to them (as we have already hinted before) the most proper Motives, for withdrawing them from Sin: Insisting most particularly on the Danger they run themselves into, of being Damn'd for all Eternity, and on the Difficulty there is in removing the Will effectually from Sin, which is grown habitual by many and repeated Acts, because that Habit becomes a second Nature, and consequently hard to be quit- ted ; such Sinners, according to St. *Aug.* Proceeding to so great Blindness of Understanding, that small Sins appear as nothing to them, and the most grievous seem to them but as trivial Faults, which is the Reason that at the Hour of their Death they are not concern'd for them as they ought to be.

## C H A P. XXX.

*Of the Remedies to be apply'd.*

THE Remedies to be apply'd against Sin, are of two Sorts; either they may be given by way of Council, or by way of Obligation. If the Penitent has already of himself, taken such measures, as you think may be proper to retrieve him out of the State of Sin, and to convert him truly to God, then it will be enough for you, to assist him in this holy Design by your Council and Advice; but if instead of finding this Fervour in him, you observe a Coldness and Indifference, which gives you Reason to doubt whether he is in a Disposition of doing what is his Duty; then you may enjoin him by way of Penance, the use of these Means and Remedies which you think most convenient for his present Distemper, or Ailment; and in such case that Penance is not properly satisfactory, but Medicinal, because it is not given by way of Chastisement, but rather as a Remedy both to cure the Wounds of Sin, and as a Preservative for the future.

Those

Those Penances which we call Medicinal, are absolutely necessary, in regard of habitual Sinners, and one of the greatest Advantages they receive by Confession ; for it would be but to little Purpose carefully to examin into the Number, Nature, and Circumstances of Sins, if Confessors did not prescribe proper and efficacious Remedies to cure the Penitent ; for if the Confessor did not do something for the Health of his Penitent, he would be like a Physician, who after taking great Pains to know the Quality and Cause of the Distemper, and consulting several Eminent Authors, who had treated of this Matter, should at last satisfy himself with only asking his Patient some few Questions, without prescribing any Remedies for his Recovery. And as that Physician who should follow this Method, would be blam'd by all the World ; so, would they also laugh at the Sick Person, who after taking great Pains to discover his Illness, and to have it Cur'd, should content himself without doing any thing towards it that was prescrib'd. The World would certainly say, such a Sick Person had no Mind to be Cur'd. You may make the same Judgment of Penitents, who will neither Receive, nor Practice any Medicinal Penances proper to deliver them from their Sins. In this Case



you are not to give them Absolution, till they are resolv'd to take those convenient means, by which it may appear, that they aspire to the end, which is never to commit a Mortal Sin again.

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## C H A P. XXXI.

### *Of Medicinal Penances.*

#### *First Remedy.*

**T**Here are two Sorts of Medicinal Penance, one more general against all Kinds, the other more particular against certain Sins: We will here set down the chief of them for the convenience both of Confessors and Penitents. The First Remedy against Sin, and the most Universal, is Prayer, because by that the Sinner receives Necessary Assistance to avoid Sin. Enjoin therefore your Penitents every Morning and Night for such Time as you shall appoint, to ask of God with Fervour, the Assistance of his Grace, by making three Acts of Virtue, the First, of Humility, acknowledging in the Presence of God their great Misery, both in Respect to the unhappy State their Sins have brought them to, and for

for that they cannot rise out of it, without the particular Assistance of his Almighty Arm, nor continue in a State of Grace, one Moment without his special Support ; the Second, of Hope, confiding thro' the Merits of *JESUS CHRIST*, who came into the World for the Love of Sinners, that God will grant them the Grace of a sincere Conversion, and that they may persevere to the End in doing good. The Third Act shall be a firm Purpose on all Occasions to avoid Sin, and to satisfy God thro' the Merits of *CHRIST* for those Sins, they have already committed ; according to the Advice and Order of their Confessor. By this Exercise of Prayers they will find Comfort and be encourag'd to use other more efficacious Means, which may be afterwards prescrib'd ; It will be also proper to advise them, often in the Day to repeat these Three Acts, by means of some Ejaculatory Prayer, as, *O God thou wilt not despise a contrite and humble Heart, I have hoped in thee Lord, and I shall not be confounded, I have directed my Steps towards all thy Commandments, I have hated all the Ways of Iniquity.* At night exhort them, not to forget to Examine their Conscience, to see whether during the Day, they have been Faithful in applying the Remedies their Confessors have prescrib'd them ;  
and

and avoided those Sin, they were before most subject to, and if they find they have been deficient, they must make a New Purpose to be the more Faithful the next Day.

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## C H A P. XXXII.

### *The Second Remedy.*

**T**HE Second general Remedy against Sin, is Spiritual Reading, and Meditation of Christian Truths, of which every one is capable that can but Read, for whilst he Reads a good Book, as, *Granada's Sinners Guide*, if he weighs, and considers the Importance, and the Infallibility of those Truths in the Presence of God, he truly Meditates. This Exercise has prov'd of great use to many for abandoning Vice, and withdrawing themselves from the irregularities of their past Life; some of whom have in Process of Time become Saints.

## C H A P. XXXIII.

*The Third Remedy.*

**T**HE Third Remedy against Sin, is to prescrib'd to your Penitents the Practice of such Virtues, as are opposite to the Vices they are subject to. As, for Example, you are to prescribe Patience and Meekness to such as are Cholerick, and to accustom themselves to treat those Courteously, whom they us'd Rudely; enjoin Alms to Covetous and Worldly People and so the rest.

## C H A P. XXXIV.

*The Fourth Remedy.*

**T**HE Fourth Remedy, is frequent Confession, which is a Specifick to those who Confess but seldom, and to whom, 'tis probable, this Neglect is the Occasion of living in the Disorders they are



are guilty of, As for frequent Communion, those only ought to be advis'd to it who are free from the Affections to Sin, even Venial; according to St. Francis Sales his Direction, in his Introduction to a Devout Life, Part 2. Chap. 20.

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## CHAP. XXXV.

### *The Fifth Remedy:*

**T**HE Fifth Remedy, is Fasting, which ought to be enjoind those Penitents who have many Sins, especially such as are subject to the Vice of Luxury; If they cannot Fast without being much taken Notice of, as in a Family, instead of Fasting you may enjoin them to Abstain from their Supper, or take some small matter as on Fasting Days, and to make a moderate Dinner, and to drink little strong Liquor, or rather none at all. If they are Laborious, or such as are oblig'd to hard Work, who cannot well subsist, or follow their Business without their ordinary Meals, they may be preferib'd the aforesaid Abstinences, on Sundays, or Festivals, or at least on those Days, when they do not work so hard.

CHAP.

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C H A P. XXXVI.

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*The Sixth Remedy.*

**T**HE Sixth Remedy is Alms deeds, which is particulaly powerful to obtain Mercy of God, according to the Words of our Lord, Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall find Mercy:

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*The Seventh Remedy,*

**T**HE Seventh Remedy, is Watching, lying hard, and wearing of Hair-cloth; for Disciplins, are more proper for Cloisters and Religious Persons, than for private Houses. But these Penances we have mention'd must be moderate, so, as not to prejudice in any considerable Manner the Health of the Penitent, Watching<sup>l</sup> particulaly is to be us'd with Discretion, not to deprive the Penitent of Necessary Sleep, and that the Time they take from their Rest be employ'd in Spiritual Reading and Prayer.

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 C H A P. XXXVII.

*The Eighth Remedy.*

**T**HE Eighth Remedy, consists in certain conditional Penances, which have a particular Virtue in them, For Example; you shall order a Person, who is addicted to Swearing, that every Time he falls into that Sin he give some Alms; to such as are subject to Impurity, for every Time they are guilty of it, they shall Fast the next Day, or Abstain from Drinking any Strong Liquor; but in appointing these conditional Penances, you must remember to add some positive, for fear lest the Sacrament should prove defective if the Condition should happen to fail.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XXXVIII.

*Other Specefick Remedies.*

**T**HERE are other Remedies more Specifick, than those above mention'd, for such Sinners as have little, or no Sense of Piety, or Religion, you are to prescribe them, to make frequent Acts of Virtue; to Pray Morning and Night; to hear, or Read the Word of God; to Confess once a Month, or Fortnight; to visit Churches and Holy Places, &c. To such as Blaspheme, you are to enjoin to kiss the Ground, and to lick it with their Tongue, which is the Instrument of their Blasphemies; to lye Prostrate on the Ground begging Pardon of God; enjoin these also for their Penance, to glorify and praise the Holy Name of *JESUS*, repeating often *Glory be to the Father, &c.* Or, *blessed be the Name of God.* Advise them to oblige some Friend, or other to correct them every Time, he observes they speak a Blasphemous Word. For such as Profane Sundays, or Holidays, by Neglecting to hear Mass, or spending the Day in  
Ale



Ale Houses, or Taverns, they ought to be forbid going to those Places the next Festival, and to keep Abstinence that Day; if they have omitted that Duty on Account of Temporal Interest, some Alms are to be prescrib'd; if it be thro' Indifferency, or Indevotion, then oblige them to hear Mass upon Working Days, or to hear two the Sunday following; if they have Work'd upon a Holyday without any Lawful Cause, let them give what they gain'd by it to the Poor, with some Addition of other Alms. For such as are Disobedient to their Parents, or Lawful Superiors, they are to make Acts of Obedience, and to do the next Thing that is commanded them without Reply, so that by Degrees they may surmount the ill Habit they have contracted, of not paying that Respect which is due to their Superiors and Betters. For Parents and Masters of Families, who have little, or no Concern, for the Education and Behaviour of their Children and Servants in the Fear of God, enjoin them to make daily a serious Reflection, on their Negligence in this Point, and to form such Resolutions, as may be properest to correct that failing, purposing to be watchful over their respective Charges, to advise and correct them, when there is Necessity, &c.

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For such as are in Enmity with their Neighbours, enjoin them to Pray for, and to shew them all common Civility, when they come into their Company, &c. Order those who envy the Prosperity of others to give thanks to God for the Benefits he bestows on those they envy. To Drunkards, that they mortify themselves by Fasting; that they Drink nothing but Water, or small Beer; that they forbear such Company as draws them into Debauchery, or Excess, and not to frequent Ale Houses, or Taverns. To such as have wrong'd others in their Goods, that besides making Restitution, they give some Alms. To such as are given to Slander, or Detract, that they speak well of those who have been Injur'd in their Reputation, and oblige them every Morning to make a Resolution, not to Meddle with other Peoples Business, which does not belong to them, and that they humble themselves by prostrating on the Ground. To Persons who have nothing to do, and whose Idleness gives Occasion to their Offending God, as it frequently does, that they employ their Time, in some Business, distributing it regularly every Day, and oblige them to observe it, as near as they can. Particularly Women, and even such as are of Quality, ought to be enjoyn'd to employ themselves in Works suitable to their Sex, or the Necessities to

of their Families, or for the Poor; putting them in mind that Labour is impos'd by God himself as a Penance upon Man, and is an excellent preservative against several Sins, to which he is expos'd, since his unhappy Exclusion from the Terrestrial Paradise.

There are also other medicinal Penances, which your Zeal and Prudence will suggest, and to be made use of according to the Spiritual Necessity of your Penitents and their several Dispositions. What we have now to exhort you, is, that you be careful to employ them as you ought, and never omit them, when there is need, especially when you have to do with habitual Sinners; for as Penal and satisfactory Penances are proper to take away the Affection to Sin, so medicinal Penances generally go to the Root, and take away the very Cause of Sin, which sufficiently shews how necessary they are: In short, if you observe it, you'll find, that the Reason why habitual Sinners bring always the same Sin, to the Tribunal of Confession, is because they do not use the proper Remedies for their Cure, altho' they pretend they do all they are able, to Sin no more; for it is not sufficient to have an indifferent will not to offend God, unless a Man seriously sets his Hand to the Work, no more than it is for the sick Person to desire Health, unless he makes use of

of the Remedies that are prescrib'd him.

The End and Design of this Sort of medicinal Penances being to heal the Sinner, and to preserve him from Relapses, they ought to continue as long as any mortal Symtoms remain, for which the Exercise of some Days will not suffice, because the Distemper being yet present, the Remedies must be so too. So we see in corporal Distempers, the Remedies continue as long as there is any Sign of Illness. This Advice is one of the most important for Confessors, there being but too many of them, who perswade themselves without any grounds, that with an *Ego te absolvo*, the Penitent becomes entirely cured of his Spiritually Palsy, and that for the future, without any other thing done, he may walk, nay even run in the Ways of God's Commandments. There is no doubt but that habitual and Sacramental Grace, assist the Penitent, who has receiv'd then very much, to the observance of the Law of God, but, he having as yet a slender Portion of those Graces, and on the other Hand, Concupiscence which lorded it over him, with absolute Power, being still strong and vigorous, it is therefore requisite that he continually assail it by contrary Acts of Virtue, and by such Exercises as may be proper to overcome its Violence, till it be subdu'd and

Grace



Grace and Reason have got the upper hand in his Heart.

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## C H A P. XXXIX.

### *Of Satisfactory Penances.*

**T**HE satisfactory Penances, consisting in penal Works are impos'd in the Sacrament of Penance, principally as a Chastisement due to the Sinner to satisfy the Divine Justice; for altho' God by remitting the Guilt of mortal Sin, does at the same time remit the Eternal Pains due to it, yet he requires the Penitent should suffer some temporal Punishment proportionable to the Quality, Grievousness and Number of the Sins. The Council of *Trent* teaches us, that this Conduct of God in Regard of Sinners, is grounded not only upon Justice, which seems to require that such, as have Sin'd before Baptism, being still in the Darknes of Ignorance, should indeed be treated in a more indulgent Manner, than those, who having been deliver'd from the Slavery of the Devil and Sin, and receiv'd the Justifying Grace by Means of the Holy Ghost, yet have had the Presumption to pollute the Temple of the living God; But this treatment proceeds from his Clemency and Goodness

Goodness towards us; for if the Sins were forgiven us in the Sacrament of Penance, without any penal Satisfaction, as in Baptism, we should easily be induc'd to make little, or no account of them, and thus heaping Sin upon Sin, and Iniquity upon Iniquity, we should at last draw down the most severe Chastisement upon us at the last Day. After this important Advice, the Council adds, That such Sort of Satisfactory Punishments, serve as a Curb to restrain Sinners from offending God, making them more Vigilant and Cautious; and in this Sense they are still Medicinal, in as much as they Contribute to Preserve us from Relapses. In fine, the Council concludes this excellent Doctrine with these following Words. *It is Necessary therefore that the Priests of the Lord enjoin, as far as the Holy Ghost, and Prudence shall direct them, satisfactory and convenient Penances: Regard being had to the Quality of the Crimes, and Ability of the Penitents; lest if they should too much connive at Sin, and shew too great an Indulgence to the Penitents, enjoyning them only some slight Penances for grievous Crimes, they make themselves partakers of the Sins of others. Wherefore they are to take Care, that the Satisfaction they impose, be not only to assist the Penitents to preserve a New Life, and to Remedy their Weakness; but that*  
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it be also a Chastisement and Punishment for their Sins; for the Ancient Fathers of the Church believ'd and taught, that the Keys are given to Priests, not only to loose but to bind, and yet they did not look upon the Sacrament of Penance, as a Tribunal of Anger and Rigour, Sess. 14. cap. 8. of Penance. Here the said Council in a few Words, but very plainly, expounds, what the Doctrine of the Church is at this Day concerning Penances. First it declares, that Priests as Ministers of God, are to impose wholesome and proper Penances, having always a Regard to the Quality of the Sins, and the Ability of the Penitents; guiding themselves herein by the Light of the Holy Ghost, and by the Rules of Christian Prudence: Where 'tis proper to observe, that this Expression *are to* implies an Obligation to enjoyn such Penances as may be thought fit, for curing the Wounds of the Soul and punishing the Sinner, proportionably to his Faults and Capacity; where it appears, that by these Words, *According to, the Ability of the Penitents*, the Council does not only mean the Goods of Fortune, to which the Confessor is to have Regard, for the Regulating of Restitutions, and the Alms enjoyn'd the Penitent; but generally the Power of fulfilling whatsoever shall be enjoyn'd them. Again, that the Holy Ghost can-

not inspire Confessors contrary to what he himself Teaches us in Holy Writ, relating to the Manner of doing Penance. Lastly, That Christian Prudence is to direct them so to dispence the Gifts of God's Mercy, as not to forget the Interests of his Justice. Which is what the *R. Ritual* insinuates, in these Words, *The Confessor is to remember, that God has establish'd him both the Minister of his Justice, and of this Mercy, to the end, that being in some Measure Umpire betwixt God and Man, he at the same Time procure the Honour of God, and the Salvation of Souls.* Besides this same Prudence will Teach them fitly to apply, when Necessity requires Generical and Specific Remedies, to Cure Souls of the Wounds of Sin, as able Physicians do in the Cure of Bodily Distempers.

*Secondly*, the Council admonishes Confessors, that if they connive at Sin, and use Sinners with too much Indulgence, imposing only light Penances, for very heinous Offences, they will render themselves Partakers of the Sin of others; because easy Penances do not make Sinners sensible of the grievousness of their Sins, which occasions them easily to fall again.

*Thirdly*, the Council distinguishes, as we have done, betwixt Medicinal and

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Penal



Penal Penances, declaring, That Confessors are not only to impose such Penances as may be thought proper to preserve from Sin, but such also as may punish those which are committed; that is, to expiate them, by imposing the Pain due to them; which proves that Satisfactory Penances consist in Works, which of their Nature, are Penal and Troublesome, as is sufficiently manifest by the perpetual Practice of True Penitents. In short, the same Council declares, that Confessors are to avoid all that is contrary to this Spirit, or favours of Looseness in Point of enjoining Penances; because they have Receiv'd the Keys not only for loosing, but for binding also, hereby Teaching us, that those who do not enjoin Penances proportionable to the Sins Confess'd, do not make right Use of their Power, since they do not employ it wholly, but only in part; resembling therein a Judge, who should pardon all that come before him, and distribute his Princes Favours to all that present themselves, because they cost him nothing, and should take no Care to punish the most heinous Crimes, according to the Rules of Justice.

It may perhaps be objected, on this Occasion, that this too great Indulgence in Confessors does not proceed from their

their Easiness, and Compliance, but from the Hardness and Resistance of Penitents, who if they meet with too severe Penances, would refuse them, which is the Reason why Confessors are in a manner forc'd to sweeten them very much, for Fear of sending away their Penitents in a sort of Despair. To which we answer, that if the Confessor, perceives in his Penitent a great Repugnance to accept the Penance enjoin'd him, tho' otherwise Proportionable and Just; Charity requires that he should sweeten it as much as he can, but not that he entirely enervate it, even to taking away the proportion it ought to bear to the Quality and Quantity of the Sins committed. For as it is Just on the one side, to condescend as much as he can to human Frailty, so on the other, it is requisite that the Confessor have all the necessary Marks, of a True Conversion in his Penitent; among which the Will and Disposition to make due Satisfaction to God, is certainly one; this Will and Disposition being included in True Contrition, as we have observ'd above. Wherefore if the Penitent refuses to give due Satisfaction to God who is offended, his Absolution ought generally to be deferr'd till he has a better Knowledge of the grievousness of his Sins, and his Duty.

## C H A P. XL.

*Of imposing Penances.*

**T**Here are several things to be observ'd in imposing Penances. *First*, You must not load your Penitents Memory with a Multitude of different Penances, contenting your self with enjoining three or four at the most, of those we have mention'd above, which you shall Judge most proper for their present Circumstances and Condition. *Secondly*, You are to set the Time for performing them, either till the next Confession, if they are barely Medicinal, or to some other fix'd Time, if they are both Medicinal and Satisfactory. *Thirdly*, If the Penitent seem to express a great Dislike for one sort of Penance, and you can supply it by another equivalent and as efficacious; then you shall change it, for Fear of exposing him to the Danger of committing a New Sin, in not performing his Penance. *Fourthly*, The better to testify to him, that in imposing proportionable Penances for his Sins, you have no other View but to procure

procure his Salvation, and fulfil your own Duty, you may offer to assist him in satisfying the Divine Justice for his Sins, by taking upon you some Part of his Penance, and discharging it as well as you can; and do not question but that by this singular Act of Charity towards your Penitents, you will also lessen the Punishment due to your own Sins. *Fifthly*, Do not suffer your self to be impos'd upon by the Difficulty Penitents sometimes make in accepting even the most moderate and reasonable Penances, but use the Doctrine above prescrib'd, in Sweetning of them as much as may be, yet without totally weakning them, and taking away all their Force, and the Proportion, that is, always to be observ'd, contrary to the Spirit of the Church, declar'd in the Council of *Trent*, as has been seen. If then your Penitent persists to make Difficulties, notwithstanding your Remonstrances touching the Obligation, he is in of accepting convenient Penances, and which are much less than what the Ancient Canons prescribe; which you may Quote to this Effect, as *St. Charles* advis'd, you may then conclude he is incapable of Absolution, wherein you will follow the Sentiment of *St. Bonaventure*, who delivers himself thus on this Occasion, *That Penitent who will not accept of the proper*



*Satisfaction* enjoin'd him by the Priest commits a *Mortal Sin*. 4. Sent. dist. 16. part. 1. dub. 6. By thus deferring his Absolution, there will be no Reason to apprehend that he will omit performing his Penance. You shall exhort him nevertheless to continue his Prayers to God, that he may grant him the Spirit of True Compunction and Penance, and you must encourage him to hope for this Grace, of the Mercy of God, Offering your self to apply to the Divine Goodness in your Prayers for obtaining the same. *Sixthly*, Take Care not to run into an Error, which many Confessors fall into, who believe that the Council of *Trent* by these Words, *As far as the Holy Ghost and Prudence shall suggest*; has left Confessors at full Liberty, to order the Imposition of Penances, as they please; for these Words, only prove that it does not Oblige them to the exact Observance of the Antient Penitential Canons, where the Penances for most sorts of Sins were set down, which it was not then allow'd to Change, or Diminish without some urgent Cause; whereas now the Church only requires that Confessors impose such Penances as bear a Proportion with the Sins Confess'd, and the Ability of the Penitent, They are not to enjoin small Penances for grievous Sins; nor must they be only Medicinal

Medicinal but Penal also, to punish past Sins. To this Purpose it will be Convenient for all Confessors to know the Penitential Canons, which St. Charles Boromeus Compil'd, according to the Order of the Decalogue, for the Advantage of the Confessor of his Diocese, that they may be directed by the said Canons, to proportion their Penances according to the diversity of Sins. *Seventhly*, Remember that to the end, a Penance may be Satisfactory, it must be of its Nature Penal: According to the Etymology of the Word, which an Antient Canon mentions. *Can. Penitentia, dist. 3. de Penitentia, Penitere est Penitentiam tenere.* So that the Penitent bear the Penalty and punish himself, for the Sins he has committed; so far to satisfy Divine Justice, it is not enough that the Work be Good and Pious; but it must also be painful; for according to the Doctrine of two Famous Doctors of the Church, St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure, the Sinner to satisfy, ought, according to the Rules of Justice, in some Proportion, to make Amends for the Honour he took from God by his Sins, which Amends he cannot make, but by taking from himself something, and giving something to God; and this is what is done by Afflicting and penal Penances; for this Action, in as much as it is Good,

gives Glory to God, and in as much as it causes Pain and Trouble to the Sinner, it deprives him of a Thing he might have had, which is, Pleasure, To the End, says St. Thomas, *That a Work be Satisfactory, it is Necessary it should be Good, that it may be refer'd to God's Honour, and it must also be painful, to take from the Sinner something of what he might have had. Upon the 4. of Sent. dist. 15. q. 1. ar. 4. And St. Bonaventure, says, Therefore it is requisite that the Penitent donot only serve God by good Works, but that he also humble himself by the Pain to which he submits. Upon the 4. of Sent. part 2. art. 1. qu. 3. To which we may add, that Penances, according to the Council of Trent, being to serve as a Curb to restrain Sinners, and withhold them from relapsing into their Sins, they must of Necessity be afflicting and uneasy, without which they can never have this good Effect.*

Some will perhaps object, that the general Practice of most Confessors now a days runs quite contrary, for scarce so much as a Fast is enjoyn'd the greatest Sinners; almost all that come to Confession, being discharg'd with only the saying of some Psalms, or Prayers; Yet it cannot be said, but that among these Confessors, there are many very Learned and Pious, who we ought not to question, do  
endeavour

endeavour to discharge their Duties. To answer this, I say, that Custom is often a great evil, because it lulls asleep the most Vigilant, and makes them go on in the most beaten Road, without examining whether it is right, or wrong; they go on where the rest go, and not where they ought to go, which happens even to those who are not Ignorant in the Art of Confessing; *There are several Spiritual Physicians*, as a great Bishop observ'd that liv'd in the 9th Century, *who know the Art of curing Souls, but who out of Respect to their own Interest, or a Spirit of Flattery, avoid applying the saving Rigour of Penance for the Cure of such, as come to them to Confess their Sins.* Jonas Aurelianus de laicali Institut. Lib. 1. cap. 10.

It is true this great number of too Indulgent Confessors ought to make you examin, whether it is for want of will to satisfy God as they ought, that your Penitents, make a Difficulty of accepting of Penances proportionable to their Sins; or whether it is because they believe you too severe and rigid, finding that you enjoyn Penances much greater than what formerly us'd to be given them; for, if their Repugnance proceeds only from this Second Cause you ought to have Compassion on their Weakness and Ignorance, and at the same time to instruct and

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give



give them smaller Penances than you would do in another Case, and absolve them for that Time with this Salvo, that you increase their Penance at every Confession, till at last you come to a just Proportion; since daily Experience teaches, that the present Relaxation observ'd in the Sacrament of Penance proceeds more from the fault of Confessors, than of the Penitents.

The last Advice I have to give you on the Subject of satisfactory Penances, is, that their Proportion is not only measur'd by the Quality and Quantity of the Sins, but that Regard is to be had to the greatness of the Penitents Contrition, his Sorrow and Disposition, which accordingly as it is less or more, contributes proportionably to the discharging the Obligation of Satisfaction. Besides the Sacrament has the Vertue of it self to remit some Part of the Debt, because by blotting out the guilt of Sin, it also remits some Part of the temporal Punishment due to it; so that, to regulate this Proportion of Penances, we speak of; the Confessor is to have regard to this double Principle of the Remission of Penalties, and to impose them after a Just and Equitable manner, discounting as *St. Thomas* says, *That which is remitted by Virtue of the Keys and by the Contrition which preceded,* quod lib. 3. q. 13. art. 28.

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But what is the Penitent to do whose Confessor enjoyns him a slight Penance for grievous Crimes ? He is to supply that, by some penal Works, which he must impose upon himself, because as St. Thomas says, The proportionable Satisfaction mention'd are properly those fruits of Repentance, which our Saviour CHRIST requires of Sinners, which cannot be dispens'd with, neither by the Confessor nor Penitent, because they are of Divine Right. Those who lead a Christian Life, after being once converted to God by Means of a good Confession, supply that Defect of Penances much easier, because they receive all Afflictions, and Troubles which happen to them with a Spirit of Humility, Compunction and Resignation ; besides that the Grace which is in their Hearts carries them on to perform cheerfully other painfull and labourious Works. But those who heap Sin upon Sin, and consequently Punishment upon Punishment, are in great and evident Danger if they take not Care in Time, to do worthy fruits of Repentance. A good Model of beneficial and saving Penances to the Penitent, is, propos'd by Father Paul Comitulus of the Society of JESUS, for a Murderer, lib. 4. q. 11. n. 8. See here, says he, a saving Penance, which I believe might be enjoyn'd him, who has wickedly

wickedly and deliberately committed a Murder. He ought to humble himself before the Kindred of the Dead Person, begging their Pardon for his Offence; to repair the Damage, he has done; to cause a Mass to be said every Week during a whole Year, for the Soul of the Deceas'd, if he has wherewith to do it; to give every Week, thro' the whole Year some Alms to the Poor, for the same Intention; to recite during the same Year the Litanies upon his Knees, if he can Read, and if not, the Beads or Rosary of the Blessed Virgin; to Confess every eight Days in that Year, and every Month to receive the Blessed Eucharist, and during his whole Life to say every Day a Pater and Ave for the Soul of the Murder'd person on his Knees.

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## C H A P. XLI.

*Of Changing Penances.*

**T**AKE care also and remember, that it is not generally true (as is pretended) that all Confessors can change the Penance impos'd by another, tho' the Penitent Confess his Sins again and repeat his Confession; for this ought to be restrain'd in the Practice in the Manner following. 1. If the Confessor to whom you apply to have your Penance chang'd, be Superior to him who impos'd it, he may change it, provided there be Reason and Cause for it; because a Superiour Judge can change and revoke a Sentence given by an Inferiour; so Bishops have this Power in their Diocese, and the chief Superiors of Orders, in Regard of the Religious of their own Order. 2. A Confessor who is not Superior to him who enjoyn'd the Penance may change it, or null it, when it is manifestly unjust; because, then the Penitent is not oblig'd to fulfill it. But this is what you ought not easily to believe; and before you give Judgment of a Penance, you must first



first weigh and examin it well, not according to the loose and corrupt Practice, but conformable to the Holy Canons, whose Sense the Council of *Trent* has given us. 3. There are occasions, where in Equity and Prudence a Confessor may interpret the intention of another, over whom he has no Authority, because the Penitent may be in such Circumstances, after having been with his Confessor, that it may be Judg'd in Prudence, that he would not have impos'd the Penance we speak of, if he could have foreseen those Circumstances; as for Instance, any Infirmary hapning to him, who was enjoyn'd to Fast. 4. When there are reserv'd Sins, he that has not Power to absolve them, has not the Faculty to change the Penances impos'd relating to them, and since he has no Jurisdiction over that Sort of Sins, he cannot have any over the Penances which belong to them, all this being out of the Extent of his Tribunal, so that he cannot take Cognizance of them in any manner, unless it happens that the Penitent is in Danger of Death. Except in these Cases, which we have here observ'd, a Confessor, according to the truest Opinion, cannot change the Penances, which another has enjoyn'd, sutable to this Maxim, He who is equal to another, cannot

cannot exercise any Jurisdiction over him *Par in parem non habet potestatem*. They are like two Judges, each of which has a Right to pass Sentence, without any Appeal from one to another ; And it signifies nothing to say, that the Cause is again lay'd open by repeating the Confession, for this new opening of the Cause is necessary at all Times, when a new Judgment is to be given even in the Common Courts ; where it is not known that an Ordinary Judge changes the Penalties ordain'd by another Judge who has the same Authority with himself. Thus when one Judge in any inferiour Court has pass'd a Sentence, we do not appeal to his Colleague, but to a Superiour Tribunal.

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## C H A P. XLII.

*Whether the Penance enjoyn'd is  
to be perform'd in the State of  
Grace.*

**I**T is necessary the Penance enjoyn'd, be perform'd by the Penitent in the State of Grace, or at least, if it happens that he has fallen into Mortal Sin after Confession, he ought to have a sincere Repentance, and to have remov'd all Affection to that Sin. This Proposition, that he ought to be in the State of Grace for well discharging his Penance, is the Doctrine of the Catechism of the Council of *Trent*, supported by many Popes, and conformable to what, *St. Thomas*, *St. Bonaventure*, *Alexander de Ales*, &c. teach. And the Reason the same Catechism alledges, is that we cannot satisfy God, but by Works that are pleasing to him. Now says the Catechism, Works done without Faith and Charity, cannot be in any Manner agreeable to God; however if the Penitent has no more Affection to Sin, and  
has

has Contrition, tho' not sufficient to Justify him, it is very probable that he is in a State to satisfy the Divine Justice for his Sins, it not appearing that it is absolutely necessary for this End, that he should be actually in the Friendship of God, but 'tis sufficient that he be not his Enemy and Opposite, and that his Heart is no longer affected to Sin: This was the common Sentiment of the Holy Fathers and Antient Bishops, who look'd on those Penances as good and satisfactory, which were done then before Absolution, tho' many of those, who were in their Course of Penance, had not recover'd the Grace of God. You are not therefore to follow in Practice the Opinion of some Casuists, who Teach, that the Penitent can make Satisfaction to God by Works which were enjoin'd in the Sacrament of Penance, tho' he be in the State of Mortal Sin: Because the Sinner is to appease God's Wrath by such sort of good Works, done in Grace according to St. Bernard, *He who does not please God, cannot appease him, Si non places, non placas.* So that it will be proper in regard of those Penitents, who have perform'd their Penances in the State of Mortal Sin, that you should exhort them to begin them again; for Fear lest they be oblig'd to do them in the next World



World with incomparable more Rigour.

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*A Necessary Distinction for the well governing ones self in the Imposition of Penances.*

**T**HE Custom which the Holy Church at present follows, being not to oblige Sinners to perform their satisfactory Penances before Absolution; we must not depart from it, for it would be a punishable Rashness to pretend to alter the Practices of the Church, especially in what Regards the Sacraments. But as for the Penances which are Medicinal and Preservatives from Sin, the Confessor can, and even ought, to exact them before Absolution, when he Judges that this is expedient, and Advantagious to the Penitent. This is the common Doctrine of Divines, even of our Days. “According to the common Doctrine of Divines, says, Cardinal de Lugo, *de Sacram. Pœnit. Sect. 10. N. 170.* The Confessor may sometimes oblige his Penitent to perform his Penance before Absolution, and tho’ he cannot do it, as it is a Punishment for his Sin, yet he may considering it as a Remedy, “when

when he shall Judge it necessary, or profitable for the good of the Penitent, particularly, when he knows him easily to omit performing the Penances enjoin'd him; if he will be assur'd that the Penance he enjoin'd, shall be perform'd; or for some other good Ends, according to *Suarez*, *Reginaldus*, and other Authors. We may find them Quoted by *Bonacina* who is of the same Opinion. *de Sacram, penit disp. 5. 9. 5. Sect. 3. p. 2. N. 20.*

Among the other Ends, these Divines speak of, you must particularly reckon that, which ought to be propos'd, of putting the Penitent into a State of reconciling himself with God; which is not commonly done in a few Moments, especially by such Sinners, as are habituated in Sin. It is therefore requisite, that they be dispos'd by Prayer, by Humiliations, by pious Works, and by the Exercise of Virtues opposite to the Vices to which they were subject, This is what *St. Bernard* acknowledg'd, and has very well explicated. *As there are* says he, *little, midling, and great Sins, so there is in God a little, a middle, and a great Mercy of God to forgive them.* Whence he concludes that great Sinners, have need of great Mercy, *To the End that where Sin abounded, there also the Grace of God diffuse it self in greater Abundance*

*Abundance* Bern. Serm. de triplici Misericordia. And therefore it was, that David, after falling into Adultery, said to God, O God, have mercy on me according to thy great Mercy. But great Sinners ought not to expect of God this great Mercy, unless they obtain it of him by their Tears and many Works of Penance; the Justice of God requiring the like Conduct, as the Council of Trent teaches us in these Words. To which Newness and Integrity of Life, we cannot arrive by Means of the Sacrament of Penance, without Abundance of Tears, and without great Labours, the Divine Justice requiring it. Sess. 14. c. 2. In short it is not very reasonable, that to receive the Effects of the great Mercy of God, which are the particular and abundant Succors of actual Grace, necessary to work the Conversion of an Habitual and Inveterate Sinner, there should preceed much greater Dispositions, than those which would suffice for one, who had but lately, or by some Accident fallen into Mortal Sin? But besides, that this is conformable to the Rules of Divine Justice, there is also a Necessity that the Sinner should for some Time break the Violence of the Habits, which draws him into Sin, before he obtains Absolution; to the end that a Confessor giving it may be morally assur'd that

that he is deliver'd; which he cannot Judge, unless he sees in the Penitent a notable Diminution of those Habitual Sins, by means of such Acts of Piety, and other Exercises as have been prescrib'd him. This wise Conduct of Confessors is also grounded on the Respect they owe to Justifying Grace; which is the principal Effect of the Sacrament, and ought not to be expos'd to apparent Danger of being prophan'd by Mortal Sin, which it is almost sure that an Habitual Sinner will not be long without committing. For the same Reason Divines commonly teach, after St. Thomas, That Baptism ought not to be conferr'd on the Children of Pagans, tho' they were in a State of Receiving the Grace of this Sacrament, because of the Danger there is, that being come to the Use of Reason, they may prophane it by idolatrous Actions, after the Example of their Parents.

CHAP.



## CHAP. XLIII.

*Whether the Penitent fulfils his  
Penance by doing those Works  
which he is otherwise Oblig'd to.*

THE Penitent does not Satisfy the Penance that was enjoyn'd him, by good Works to which he is already oblig'd, unless the Confessor has sufficiently in that particular explicated his Intention in his Favour. For Example, If the Penitent be enjoyn'd three Fasts, or to hear Three Masses, he is not discharged by fasting Ember-Week, or hearing Mass upon Easter Day and the two following Festivals. And to say the Truth, intelligent and able Confessors never offer to give those Works for a Penance, which the Commandments of the Church make common both to the Just and Unjust, as well knowing that the one sort are more accountable to the Divine Justice than the other; but if the Penitent, has voluntarily engag'd himself to perform some painfull Works, it would be much properer to give them for a Satisfactory Penance; because then  
that

that would not be any longer a general Obligation but a particular.

It is convenient as we have already observ'd, to enjoyn those good Works for a Penance, which the Penitents will do themselves, and the Evils they will suffer with Patience: and the Reason is, as we have already remark'd, because these things by Virtue of the Keys, joyn'd with Sacramental Satisfaction, will supply in some Manner the little Penance that is impos'd now a days in the Tribunal of Confession. Wherefore if on some pressing Occasion, the Confessor should omit the prayer of *Passio domini nostri Jesu Christi, &c.* he ought to supply what that Prayer contains by his Intention.

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## CHAP. XLIV.

*Prayers given for a Penance ought to be said without voluntary Distraction.*

**W**hen the Confessor has given Prayers for a Penance, they are to be said with Attention, and without Voluntary Distraction, for if the Penitent is distracted some considerable Time, whilst

whilst saying those Prayers, he does not satisfy his Obligation ; and the Reason is, because those Prayers, to be Satisfactory, ought to be pleasing to God, which cannot be without the *Attention* of the Mind and Heart, which is what properly makes Prayer become an Act of Religion. Hence it was, that our Lord reproach'd the Jews with want of Religion, in these Words, *This People*, said he, *Honour me with their Lips ; but their Hearts are far from me*, St. Matt. xv. v. 8.

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## C H A P. XLV.

*Abuses committed by some Confessors in the time of a Jubilee, or other Plenary Indulgence.*

**T**AKE heed of falling into an Abuse, some Confessors are guilty of, who in the time of the Jubilee or other plenary Indulgences enjoyn very slender Penances to Persons guilty of grievous Sins, upon Pretence, that by literally fulfilling the things prescrib'd by the Popes in granting those Indulgences, they obtain the Remission of all the pain, together with the Forgiveness of the Guilt.

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This is an Abuse, and a Conduct contrary to the Spirit and Intention of the Church, which is willing to assist her Children, by means of Indulgences, to satisfy for the Penalties they have incur'd, and which they cannot acquit themselves of, either for want of Power, or by Reason of the Shortness of their Lives, or because the Penances they have done are not Proportionable to their Sins: But it does not intend by this, to dispence with the Law of God, which obliges them to do worthy Fruits of Repentance, nor to make them Negligent in the Exercise of Satisfactory Works so much recommended by Scripture, and the Holy Fathers. Wherefore the Holy Council of Trent declares *Sess. 14. cap. 8. de Penitentia*, *That the Church never had a more sure Way to avoid the Chastisements with which God Threatens Sinners, than the Exercise of such sort of Works of Penance, accompanying them with a sincere and True Sorrow.* This Spirit of the Church plainly appears in several Bulls of Indulgences granted by Popes, in which it is said, *That they are granted to those who shall be truly Penitent. Vere Penitentibus*, which Clause includes a sincere Detestation of all Sins, a firm Resolution to Sin no more, and a Will to satisfy God as we ought. When



a Sinner is in this Disposition, of doing what depends on him to satisfy Divine Justice, the Church then, as a Charitable Mother, comes to his Assistance by means of Indulgences, to the end that they may compleat the Payment of their Debts, either entirely, if they are plenary Indulgences; or in Part if limited, Hence it is, that there are Cases, in which those who have quitted their Affection to Sin, and perform'd exactly the Things appointed; yet do not always fully gain the Plenary Indulgence, because all have not the same Quantity of Debts to pay, nor have all made the same Efforts towards the discharging them, to which the Superior who has granted them, is suppos'd to have had Regard. This is what St. *Bonaventure* Teaches in these Words.

“ The Indulgences in Regard of him,  
 “ who has the Power to grant them  
 “ are worth as much as they promise,  
 “ yet it does not follow that they have  
 “ the same Value in Regard to all, but  
 “ only according to the Intention he  
 “ had, or ought to have had who  
 “ granted them; and it was not necessary to express this Intention, because  
 “ all the Faithful ought to suppose that  
 “ the Gifts and Graces of the Holy  
 “ Ghost are bestow'd in a Just Proportion, *In 4. Sent. dist. 10. q. in*

fine

*fine.* The same is infer'd from some of the Popes Bulls, in which they have expressly declar'd, that such is their intention, Thus *Boniface VIII.* in his Bull which begins, *Antiquorum Extravag. de penit et remiss.* Publishing the Indulgence of the Universal Jubily, explains himself in this Manner. *Every one shall merit so much the more, and will gain the Indulgence more fully the oftner he shall visit the Churches and with the greater Devotion he does it.* So *Innocent IV.* in his Constitution publish'd at the First General Council of *Lions*, where he grants a Plenary Indulgence to such as shall Contribute to the Expence of the Holy War, says, That every one shall gain it, *In Proportion to what he shall Contribute, and according to the Devotion he does it with:* By which those Popes give to understand, that the Plenary Indulgences are gain'd in Proportion to the Penitential Works we do, and according to the Fervour of the Devotion we bring, and it is thus, the Obligation of Satisfaction is lessen'd. *Baronius*, that great Cardinal who well understood the Spirit of the Church, in Point of Indulgences, after Inserting in his Annals upon the Year 1073. Number 71. 1. The Indulgence granted by *Greg. VII.* to the Bishop of *Lincoln* in *England*, without prejudice to

*Such Satisfactory Works, as every one might perform according to his Possibility, says this Restriction was added by that Holy Pope, To shew that the Indulgences of the See Apostolick are Communicated to those who do not omit good Works, as far as they are able, and not to those who are Lazy and Cold and Languish in Sloath, Cardinal Cajetan is of the same Opinion, as appears in that after having cited the Words of the Bulls vere penitentibus, he adds, That the Penitents who are negligent, do not gain the Indulgences, but only such, as are Careful and Vigilant, because properly speaking only such as these can be said to be Truly Penitent. After which he explicates the Advantages to this Doctrine according to which, says he, We answer, the greatest Part of the Questions which are put upon this Subject as,*  
*" That it too much extends the Tri-*  
*" bunal of Penance; that there would*  
*" be no need any more to pray for*  
*" such as have a Plenary Indulgence,*  
*" granted them at the Hour of Death;*  
*" that Wise Judicious Persons admire*  
*" this Profusion of Indulgences, and o-*  
*" thers openly decry them. Besides this*  
*" Doctrine serves to awaken the Piety*  
*" of the Faithful, and excite them to*  
*" Works of Penance; and yet this*  
*" does not at all diminish the Virtue*  
*" and*

“ and Efficacy of Indulgences, no more  
“ than the Force and Virtue of the Sacra-  
“ ment, is taken away, when we say,  
“ that such as approach, ought to be  
“ well dispos’d, if they desire to receive  
“ the Advantage. For according to  
“ this way of explicating Indulgences,  
“ there are none but those who are  
“ unworthy, who do not receive the  
“ Benefit of them. *Tract. 10. de Susci-*  
*piantibus Indulgentias. q. 1.*

The Church continues still to this Day to dispense Indulgences with the same Intention and Spirit, since in granting Jubilees, she enjoins such Works, as are of their own Nature Satisfactory, as Fasts, Alms, Prayers, Visiting of Churches; and when she grants other Plenary Indulgences, it is upon Condition, that they shall receive the Sacrament of Penance, and perform the Penial Works which are prescrib’d them; designing thus to procure to the Faithful Means to gain the Indulgence; either by making use of them towards finishing the Satisfaction they have already began, or by supplying their past Impenitency by the Penitential Works, the Bull ordains, and by conceiving a more Extraordinary and a more Lively Repentance than hitherto they have had. Since then this Sentiment appears the most conformable to the Spirit of the

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Church,



Church, let us conclude with *St. Bonaventure*, that this is a wholesome Design, To be constantly inducing Men to do Penance. In 4 Sent dist. 15. p. 1. art, 1. q. 3.

*St. Thomas*, gives the same Advice, and it is absolutely necessary to put it in Practice, in the Confession Seat. You must, says the Holy Doctor, advise those who gain Indulgences, not to leave off, therefore the Works of Penance, which are enjoyn'd them; for they will be always a Remedy to them, tho' they had discharg'd all the Pain due to their Sins; and the more, for that they are more Indebted to the Divine Justice, than they imagin, Cardinal *Bellarmin* perfectly agrees with this Doctrine of the Angel of Schools. "The Faithful who govern themselves with Christian Prudence" says this Learned and Pious Cardinal, "in gaining the Indulgences granted by the Popes, are not wanting at the same Time to apply themselves to do worthy Fruits of Repenance and to satisfy the Divine Justice for their Sins" *Lib. 1. Controv. de Indulgen. cap. 12. ad 3.*

## C H A P. XLVI.

*Of Absolution.*

**A**fter having spoken of the Essential Parts of Penance, Contrition, Confession and Satisfaction, we are now to treat of Absolution, which most Confessors, now a days, give to all Penitents indifferently, and without Discretion; which has such dismal Consequences, in the Profanation of the Sacraments, and Corruption of Manners; which is now so general, that the Church groans under it, and is forc'd to testify her Sorrow. Such Confessors, says devout *Bellarmin*, as are very easy in absolving all Sorts of Sinners act as if they were not to give an account of their Ministry to JESUS CHRIST; for they both ruin and corrupt the People by their Ignorance and their Presumption, and take from Sinners the Means of doing true Penance, for there would not be at this time so great a Facility in Sinning, if there were not Confessors, who practice too great a Facility in absolving, *Conc. 8. in Dom. 4. Advent.*

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## CHAP. XLVII.

*Cases wherein Absolution is to  
be refus'd, &c.*

THE Roman Ritual approv'd by Paul V. in its Instruction upon the Sacrament of Penance, gives this Advice. "That the Priest should carefully consider what the Cases are, and who the Persons to whom Absolution is to be granted, refus'd or deferr'd; lest he should absolve those who are incapable of this Grace. After which the said Ritual sets down the principal Cases, which render Penitents incapable, among which are those, who give no Mark of Sorrow, when they come to the Sacrament; who will not depose their Hatred and Enmities against their Neighbour; who will not restore the Goods of others when they can; who will not forsake the Occasions of Sin, or Sin it self, nor change their Lives; such as cause or give publick Scandal, and are not any ways dispos'd to give publick Satisfaction, or make Reparation; these are the Persons, to whom the R. Ritual says you are to refuse Absolution.

CHAP.

## C H A P. XLVIII.

*The first Case.*

THE first Case in which the Priest cannot give Absolution, is to such as do not give Marks of Sorrow. *Qui nulla dant signa Doloris.* St. Bonaventure said the same thing long since, "The first Case in which the Priest cannot absolve the Penitent, is, when he is not truly contrite; for he that is not in this State, cannot be absolv'd from his Sins by the Pope himself *In Confessionali. Cap. 4. de usu clavium.* Part. 1. But who are those, who do not give a true Sign of Sorrow? True Sorrow, as we have already observ'd, essentially includes three things. The Detestation of Sin, a firm Purpose to sin no more, and a sincere Will to satisfy God, who is offended. As for this third Part of Sorrow; we have already treated of it in speaking of Penal Satisfactions. We will now shew how a Confessor may probably judge when a Penitent, has or has not a Detestation and true Repentance of his Sins, with a firm Resolution to sin no more. In the first place, you are to take it for a certain Rule, that the sole Testi-



mony of the Penitent, who says he is sorry for his Sins, and makes a Resolution to sin no more is not sufficient; because being at the same time Witness and Criminal, his Testimony in his own Cause ought to be look'd upon as suspicious, especially when the Confessor, who is Judge, has otherwise such Signs and Marks, as give him much reason to doubt of the Truth of what he says: So we see, that tho' the Penitent, after he has made his Confession, says, he has accus'd himself of all his Sins; yet if the Confessor has reason to think he has conceal'd some Sin thro' Shame, Fear, or some other Human Motive; in this Case, he does not mind the Penitents Declaration, but goes on to examin and enquire, and it often happens, that the Penitent is found not to speak the Truth. If then the Penitent ought not always to be believ'd in his own Case, and in things which he cannot be suppos'd to be ignorant of, and that he is silent upon no other Account but to avoid the Trouble of confessing; with how much more Reason, ought he not to be credited, when he says he has a true Sorrow, if there be other causes to doubt of it; since most Penitents do not know what is requisit for a Supernatural Sorrow, and particularly that true Contrition, whether perfect or imperfect, ought so

to change the Will of the Sinner, that he should not only retain no Affection to Sin, but should have a Detestation for it, according to the Council of Trent, which declares *Sess. 14. cap. 4. de Pen.* " That this Contrition includes not only " a Cessation from Sin, as also a Will " to begin a new Life, but likewise a " Hatred of the pass'd Life. Besides, there are but too many Penitents, who imagin it is sufficient to have any sort of Resolution not to offend any more; but herein they deceive themselves very much; for this Resolution ought to be firm and constant; even to be willing to lose all Things, and Life it self, rather than offend God Mortally: and if it be so, then Penitents ought to use proper Means for putting it in Execution; as Discreet Prudent Persons do, when they say, they will effectually do a Thing they resolve on. Reason therefore requires, that full and entire credit be not given to the Penitent, who is here both Party and Accuser.

Again you are not altogether to believe your Penitent, if you look upon him as a Sick Person, who comes to the Spiritual Physician to be cur'd. For what would you say of a Physician, who should conclude his Patient had no Fever upon his bare Word, tho' he saw in him, according to the Rules of Physick, all the  
contrary

contrary Symptoms; as for Instance, His Pulse beating high and fast, his Tongue dry and inflam'd, and his Spirits in continual Agitation? How then shall any one be esteem'd an able or a good Confessor, who contrary to the Rules, which the Holy Fathers have left, and the best Authors have observ'd, shall believe his Penitent free from the Fever of Sin, because the Penitent himself says he is so, tho' by his own Confession he perceives that his Heart is yet entirely possess'd with Concupiscence. — You ought to judge that your Penitents (whatever they say to the contrary) have not a true Sorrow; First, when they come to Confession with a haughty Air, as if they design'd to out-brave the Minister of JESUS CHRIST, expressing Impatience and Trouble at every Question he asks, tho' it be to know the true State of their Soul. 2ly. When they rehearse their Sins to their Confessor, as Things indifferent, rather to discharge their Memory than their Conscience. 3ly. When in confessing their own Sins, they strive to cast all the Fault upon others, and instead of accusing, they excuse themselves at every turn. 4ly. When you find that they designedly would hide a Mortal Sin, which had not been discover'd, but by the Industry and Skill of their Confessor. 5ly. If they refuse to receive

receive the Penance which is thought proper and proportionable to their Sins, according as is observ'd above. 6ly. If they will not take the necessary Measures for avoiding of Sin; For he who will not make use of Means, has no desire to compass the End. 7ly. If they are of the Number of those, who expressly seek after Ignorant or Loose Confessors, and who study and pry into Casuists, till they have found one that proves favourable to their Concupiscence: Like Sick Persons, who seek out unskilful Physicians or Quacks, who promise to cure all sort of Distempers, only with Ointments; or like litigious Men, who having but little Conscience, are not much concern'd whether the Suit they have in hand, be just or no, but are satisfied that the first Lawyer they meet with tells them, they have a good Cause, tho', in reality they are in the wrong. What we have said will sufficiently shew, who those are, that have not sufficient Sorrow in the Sacrament of Penance.



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C H A P. XLIX.*The Second Case.*

**S**Econdly according to the R. Ritual, you are to refuse Absolution to such, as preserve in their Hearts a Hatred and Averſion for their Neighbour, *Qui Odia et Inimicitias deponere nolunt.* The Signs that Hatred and Enmity ſtill remain, are, If the Penitent does not give his Enemy any real Teſtimony of Charity or Chriſtian Good Will, which all owe to each other; as for example; if he reſuſe to conſerſe with him, ſpeak of him with Charity, or ſalute him when they meet.

## C H A P. L.

*The Third Case.*

**T**Hirdly, Absolution is to be refus'd according to the R. Ritual to such, as do not make the Restitutions they are oblig'd to and when they are able, *aut aliena, si possunt, restituere nolunt.* Where you are to observe: First, That this is to be understood no less of the Restitution of Good Name than of Goods, there being the same Obligation for the one as for the other. Secondly, That Penitents ought not to be absolv'd, who have once or twice promis'd to restore, and yet have not perform'd it, tho' they could have done it. Thirdly, That our Neighbour's Reputation is injur'd, not only by imputing of false Crimes, but by discovering those that are private, because both the one and the other does him Harm. Fourthly, That it is a Detriment to our Neighbour's Reputation to report tho' it be doubtfully and with Uncertainty, any thing that is prejudicial, as if one should say, such a Maid is reported to have been debauch'd; for tho' this does not quite take away her Reputation yet

yet it lessens it considerably. *Fifthly*, Restitution of Honour is to be made, if possible, before the same Persons who were present at the Detraction or Calumny, and such Detractors are oblig'd to unsay the thing, if it was not true or uncertain; and if true, but private, they are to own and blame their too great Facility, in Speaking and Affirming, without well Considering, whether what they said, was well grounded or no. *Sixthly*, The Obligation of restoring the Goods of others may be reduc'd to three Heads, either for having unjustly taken them, as by Robbery or Theft, or for retaining them unjustly, as by not paying Servants or Labourers their Wages; or lastly, by having caus'd some Damage Malitiously, as by burning your Neighbour's House, or some other Way. *Seventhly*, That very often, those who are oblig'd to Restitution, pretend it is morally impossible for them to make Satisfaction; tho' it be not true. Therefore when this sort of Penitents present themselves to you, if Gentlemen of Estates oblige them to pay every Year, what remains of their Rents, after a decent and moderate Expence, as becomes Persons of their Rank, and to induce them to it, let them understand, that they ought to live as sparingly out of a Spirit of Justice, as others of the same Condition do, out of a Spirit of Avarice

Avarice; who are nevertheless well look'd upon in their Condition, tho' they have re-trencht their Expences, and keep but a very small Family and Retinue. If the Debtor be a Tradesman or a Day-Labourer, you shall oblige him not to go to the Ale-house or Tavern, without some pressing Necessity, and not to be at any Expences above his Condition; and forbid him Gaming, &c. If these Persons refuse to use such Means, or the like, which are proper for enabling them to make Re-stitution: You ought then to judge, according to the Rules of Prudence, that they have no Inclination to part with what is not their own; and therefore, you are not to give them Absolution; unless they will resolve immediatly to follow your Advice; which you will be able to guess at in their next Confession, by their Actions, and by their way of Living, and Behaviour.



## CHAP. LI.

*The Fourth Case.*

**T**Hose ought not to be absolv'd, according to the R. Ritual, who will not leave the immediate Occasion of Sin; *Aut proximam peccandi occasionem deferere nolunt.* We call that the immediate Occasion of Sin, in which a Person is so nearly drawn by Sin, that he is in a probable Danger of yielding and falling into it. Where we are to observe; *First,* That the Occasion does not cease to be immediate, tho' it cause; not a Person to fall often. It is sufficient, that it be present, and that it has caus'd him to Sin, once or twice, in a short time, and occasions violent Temptations; tho' it has not yet drawn him into Sin; because it is never lawful to expose ones self to evident Danger of offending God. *Secondly,* That there are certain immediate Occasions from which a Man may easily disengage himself, as that of Drunkenness, which requires little more than keeping from  
Taverns,

Taverns, and Ale-houses, and avoiding that Company which might draw them in, and such as are subject to this Vice, ought to be enjoyn'd this as a Remedy absolutely necessary for them: But there are other Occasions, which cannot be so easily quitted; as, when two Persons live together, and have not the Liberty of parting, in which Case you must enjoyn them, never to be together alone, if they are guilty of Sins of Impurity, but if they be in Enmity or Hatred, then you must oblige them to Acts of Charity, of Patience &c. *Thirdly*, There are certain things, which are of their Nature immediate Occasions of Sin, as keeping a Servant with whom they have offended some Months or Weeks, or with whom they are violently tempted to Sin; reading Lascivious and Love Books; making Cards or Dice their Business, or keeping a Gaming House, as *St. Charles* remarks; and every Man is oblig'd to withdraw himself from such Occasions, because they are generally dangerous to all. *Fourthly*, There are others which are not immediate Occasions, but only to some certain Persons, by reason of their particular Disposition, as being a Judge to one that is not capacitated for it, or has a strong Inclination to Covetousness: Being Lawyers or Attorneys with the same Defects: In which Cases, if the Incapacity

city cannot be remedied, or the Passion of getting Money unjustly, appears in them to be morally Unsurmountable, such Persons are oblig'd to quit those Places and Employes. The same may be said of a Merchant or Trader, who cannot abstain from unlawful Traffick, tho' he endeavour to cover his Injustices with several Pretexts; the Repentance of such Persons is but Deceit and Mockery, according to the Decision of the *Literan Council* under *Innocent II.* 1139. Can. *It is a false Repentance, when the Penitent quits not an Employ in Court, or a Trade, which he cannot in any manner follow without Sin.*

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## CHAP. LII.

### *The Fifth Case.*

THE R. Ritual farther requires that Absolution be denied to such, as make it appear by their constant Practice, that they will not leave Sin nor correct their Lives; *Aut alio modo peccata derelinquere et vitam in melius emendare nolunt.* These are the Habitual Sinners who never use proper Means to deliver themselves

themselves from those Sins they are so subject to; whence the Confessor has good Ground to believe, that the Will of such habitual Sinners is still link'd to Sin. Upon this Occasion, you are to observe; *First*, That your Penitents are oblig'd to answer you directly, when you ask them, how long they have been engag'd in that Habit of Sin; because you have a Right, as Judges and Physicians of their Souls, to ask this Question: Whence those Casuists, who have taught the contrary are justly and designedly condemn'd in the 58. Proposition, among the 65. prescrib'd by Pope *Innocent XI.* *Secondly*, If the Penitent has already several Times confess'd the same Sin; you are to ask him, whether he has endeavour'd to mend that Fault, and us'd the Means he was prescrib'd for that end; but if you find he has us'd no efficacious Endeavours, you must then judge, that he had not that sincere Resolution to leave that Sin, as he ought to have had; and in that Case, for the Security of his and your own Conscience, you are to dispose him to repeat his past Confessions; since he began to accustom himself to that Sin. *Thirdly*, If it be of late only, that he is us'd to fall into this Vice, then it will be advisable to give him some Time to break this triple Cord or Chain of an ill Custom, according to that of the Psalmist



Psalmist: *The Cords of Sin have environ'd*  
*me. Ps. 118. v. 61.* Thus did *St. Fran-*  
*cis Xaverius* the great Apostle of the *In-*  
*dies*, both practice and teach, as it is  
 written in his Life. " We are not, says  
 " this Saint, presently to give Absolution  
 " to such as are engag'd in a Custom  
 " or Habit of Sin; but they are to be  
 " allow'd two or three Days, to pre-  
 " pare their Hearts by the Consideration  
 " and Meditation of certain Truths, to  
 " the end, that during the time of this  
 " Delay, they may wash away from  
 " their Souls the Spots of Sin by Tears  
 " and Voluntary Penances; make the  
 " Restitutions they may be oblig'd to; be  
 " reconcil'd to those they have offended,  
 " or have any Hatred to; and withdraw  
 " themselves from the Vices of Impurity  
 " and other Irregularities they may be  
 " engag'd in. It is much better that  
 " these Things should precede, Absolu-  
 " tion than follow it. *Turselin, lib. 6.*  
*cap. 17.* We see by this, that the Saint  
 confirms the Maxims we have already no-  
 ted, and teaches Confessors the way pro-  
 fitably to defer Absolution, and with a  
 Christian Conduct and Wisdom to use  
 the double Power of binding and loosing,  
 which they have receiv'd from JESUS  
 CHRIST; for to bind in the Tribunal  
 of Penance, according to the Sentiment  
 of *Vasquez*, a great Divine *de Pen. q.*

ga. n. 1. *dub.* 2. does not only consist in refusing Absolution, but also in requiring of the Penitent, that he should practice certain Exercises of Piety and Works of Penance proper to dispose him to receive Absolution another Time; so that according to this Divine, those Confessors who do otherwise, exercise only a Part of their Ministry, and do not answer the Intention of JESUS CHRIST our Sovereign Pastor.

Do not believe that the little Exhortation you can make, in the Time of Confession to an habitual Sinner, is sufficient to supply the Want of Dispositions, which he ought to acquire by the Exercises of Penance: For such Sinners are not only dead, they are also buried; and Custom is like a heavy Stone, which covers the Grave, and not easily to be remov'd; so that there must be an extraordinary Grace, and even miraculous to withdraw them all on a sudden, out of that State: Wherefore, you are not to suppose, that those who present themselves to you have this Grace, for those Conversions, which happen in a Moment, are very rare; what you have to do in such Circumstances, is, not to hazard either the Sacrament, or the Salvation of the Penitent; but to have Recourse to the Ordinary Ways, which are in your Power; that is, to set apart a convenient

venient time for the Penitents to prepare themselves to receive the Grace of Absolution, practising what the Council of Trent, cap. 2. Sess. 14. insinuates touching the Penance: And is, That Penitents should spend some Time in Sighs of Compunction, and in the Exercise of Penitential Works, as we have already mention'd. But how much Time, some will enquire, ought habitual Sinners to spend in such Preparations, that a Confessor may judge him well dispos'd? This cannot be precisely determin'd; what may be said, is, That then you ought to judge them sufficiently dispos'd, when you see they present themselves at the Confession Seat, after the Habit of Sin they were guilty of, is considerably corrected. Such is the Sentiment of a Famous Doctor, who says upon this Subject: *For my Part, were I a Confessor, I would not give them Absolution, if I saw there was no Amendment since their former Confessions, or at least, a Beginning of Amendment: And a litte after, he adds: But if there follow'd a notable Amendment, I would give them Absolution again.* This Amendment commonly appears by the Diminution of the Number of his Sins, when the Person has had as much Opportunity to commit them as formerly he had, and not otherwise; and farthermore, if he has been faithful, to put in Practice the Remedies

medies the Confessor prescrib'd him: Both these Circumstances shewing, that the Will has done something towards Amendment, which gives a Confessor sufficient reason to judge, that the Sinner, tho' he has relaps'd twice or thrice, it is rather thro' Weakness, occasion'd by a long Habit of Sin, than a voluntary and fixt Adhesion to Sin. If nevertheless you think you ought, in Prudence to defer Absolution for some longer Time, you may do it; since according to Card. de *Lugo*, 'tis the common Opinion of Divines, that a Confessor can, and even ought to defer Absolution, if it be but to make the Penitent more cautious, and to fix his Resolutions the faster. When the Confessor, says this Card. *dist. 14. Sect. 10. n. 171.* judges the deferring of Absolution, may serve to make the Penitent more cautious, and strengthen him in his Resolution of sinning no more, making him thus avoid Relapses; he may without Difficulty, and indeed he ought sometimes, as a Spiritual Physician, to make use of this Remedy for the Good of his Penitent; and in this Case, the Sick Person would be in the wrong in complaining of his Physician, to whom he has submitted himself in the Sacrament to be cur'd, and herein we ought not to deviate from the common Opinion, which is confirm'd by

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" Experience



" Experience, in a great Number of  
 " weak Penitents, to whom this Remedy is  
 " found very profitable for the procu-  
 " ring in a short Time an entire Cure,  
 " *De Sacram. Peniten. dispu. 4. Sent. 10.*  
 n. 171. The same Cardinal goes further  
 and affirms, That the Confessor may de-  
 fer Absolution, tho' he judges upon pro-  
 bable Grounds, that his Penitent is suf-  
 ficiently dispos'd to receive it, and even  
 when he shews a Repugnance to such a  
 Delay; provided it be done with Rea-  
 " son. These are his Words: There  
 " may occur some Difficulty, whether the  
 " Confessor can sometimes safely defer  
 " Absolution, without the Consent of the  
 " Penitent; when, at the same time, he  
 " has Cause probably to believe, that he  
 " is sufficiently dispos'd to receive it,  
 " whereupon the common Opinion, which  
 " is, that he may, seems to me very  
 " sound; for tho' the Penitent, who is  
 " sufficiently dispos'd, has a Right, after  
 " he has confess'd, to the Sentence and  
 " Sacramental Absolution, yet he has it not  
 " in such a manner, as that the Confessor  
 " is oblig'd to absolve him, that very  
 " Moment: For it belongs to a Judge to  
 " determine when it shall be most pro-  
 " per to give Judgment. *Ibid. 168. 169.*  
 This Doctrine so common among Di-  
 vines, will bring Confessors out of  
 these Difficulties they sometimes labour  
 under,

under, as doubting whether their Penitents have that Sorrow and firm Resolution of renouncing Sin, as they ought to have, because then according to this Doctrine, they may, without scruple, defer giving Absolution, prescribing their Penitents, in the mean time, such Exercises of Piety and Works of Penance, as may the better prepare them to receive the Fruit of Absolution.

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## CHAP. LIII.

*Absolution not to be given in a doubtful Matter, except in Case of Death.*

NOW upon this Occasion, it is necessary to inform you, that, when the Matter of the Sacrament, in Regard of Contrition, is something doubtful; you ought not (except in Danger of Death) to give Absolution; if you doubt, with great Probability, that your Penitent has not that Contrition, accompanied with those essential Conditions to make it true and sufficient, according as has been said before. Because it is never permitted, except in Case of Death, to Administer a Sacrament with a doubtful

ful Matter, as it appears in the Example of Baptism, the most necessary of all the Sacraments; and yet it is not allow'd to administer it in Rose water, or any Water that is chang'd, unless the Catechumen be in evident Danger of losing his Life. The Church has never approv'd the contrary Practice; because it would be a great Irreverence done to the Blood of JESUS CHRIST, contain'd in the Sacraments, as in so many precious Vessels, if it should be expos'd, without Necessity, to be unprofitably lost: Even so, all men would conclude, that a Servant made little Account of a precious Liquor his Master had entrusted him with, in a very curious Vessel; if, instead of cleaning the Glasses into which it was to be poured, or taking care to have them well wash'd, he should pour it into the first Vessels he met, without knowing whether they were wash'd or no. And it is nothing to the purpose to say, that this Irreverence is avoided by a conditional Intention; for the same might be said of Baptism, administer'd in Rose-water, and yet it is not allow'd to be done: Besides that, every one in the Administration of the Sacraments, has this conditional Intention, at least habitually; no Man having an Intention to do that which is out of his Power. But that does not excuse him from Rashness, who undertakes a Sacred Action, which  
he

he probably foresees will be of no Effect. This Proceeding exposing the Salvation of Souls to much Danger, since there will be some Penitents, who not knowing the necessary Dispositions to the Sacraments, will rest satisfied after their Confession, having receiv'd an exterior Absolution; whence it will follow, that not having receiv'd the justifying Grace, they will dye in their Sins, and be Eternally Lost. And there's no saying they are excusable by knowing no better, for their Simplicity; because Ignorance of essential Duties does not excuse from Sin, according to St. Thomas, who teaches, That the Ignorance of things we are oblig'd to know, is a Sin: To which must be added, that true Contrition, according to all its Parts, being necessary, *Necessitate medij*, according to the Language of the Schools, for him to be justified, who is in the State of Mortal Sin, nothing can absolutely supply it.



## C H A P. LIV.

*The Sixth Case.*

**S***ixthly*, according to the R. Ritual, we cannot grant Absolution to such as have given publick Scandal, unless they have already made publick Reparation. *Aut publicum Scandalum dederint, nisi publice satisfaciant, ut Scandalum tolerant.* Wherefore Confessors ought to observe, that it is not sufficient, according to the Words of the Ritual, for those publick Sinners to cease to give Scandal, but they ought also to retrieve what is past by a publick Satisfaction or Penance: And in short the Council of *Trent* ordains that this sort of Satisfaction which Confessors are to enjoin publick Sinners, cannot be chang'd into private or secret Penances, but by Bishops only. *Seff. 24. cap. 8. de refer.*

## C H A P. VI.

*The Seventh Case.*

THE Ritual adds, that, *Confessors are not to absolve those, whose Sins are reserved to Superiors. Neque etiam eos absolvant, quorum peccata sunt Superioribus reservata.* Giving to understand by these Words, that they are not to put in practice the Opinion which was held before the Council of *Trent*; that a Penitent having some reserv'd Sins, with others not reserv'd; his Confessor might absolve those not reserv'd, and send him to the Superior, to be absolv'd from the reserv'd. The Ritual says positively, that we ought not to absolve such as have Sins that are reserv'd to Superiors. *Quorum peccata sunt Superioribus reservata.* And this is what the Council of *Trent* has establish'd by a Decree. *Sess. 14. cap. 7. de pen.* Priests says the Council, *Having no Power in reserv'd Cases; unless at the Point of Death, the only Thing they are to do, is to perswade their Penitents to go to the Lawful Superiors, to receive the Grace of Absolution; where the Council by these Words, the only*

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thing, has taken from ordinary Confessors all Jurisdiction not only of Absolutions from reserv'd Cases, but from absolving the Persons, who have those Cases.

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## C H A P. LVI.

### *The Eighth Case.*

**E***ighthly*, All such are to be deny'd Absolution as are ignorant of the principal Mysteries of our Holy Faith, and other things, which Christians ought to know; but this we have already explicated above, with the necessary Restrictions and Distinctions.

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## C H A P. VII.

### *The Ninth Case.*

**N***inthly*, We ought not to give Absolution to such Persons as are Ignorant of the necessary Things, belonging to their State and Condition; nor to those, who are very negligent in acquitting

ring the Duty annex'd to their State or Profession; and therefore Confessors are oblig'd to enquire of their Penitents, how they discharge their respective Duties, which is grounded upon what St. Thomas says, 12. *Quest.* 76. *Ar.* 2. in corp. That it is manifest, that whoever neglects to have, or to do, what he is oblig'd to have or to do, is guilty of a Sin of Omission. For whoever sins, and continues wilfully in his Sin, is not capable of Absolution, when the Matter of Omission is considerable. According to this Principle then we ought not to absolve Judges, Lawyers, Physicians, Surgeons, &c. who do not know their Business in any competent Manner, or do not acquit themselves of it as they ought.

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## C H A P. LVIII.

### *The Tenth Case.*

**T***enthly*, You are to refuse Absolution to such as will follow Opinions, which you judge not probable, or slightly probable; it not being true, as some Authors have it, that the Confessor is oblig'd to accommodate himself to the Opinions of his Penitent,

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when they are not manifestly false; for this seems to be condemn'd in the first Proposition among the 65 censur'd by *Innocent XI.* of Blessed Memory. For if you look on your selves as Ministers of the Sacrament, it belongs to you to see that there is nothing wanting to the Lawful Administration of it; If you consider your selves as Spiritual Physicians of Souls, it belongs to you to know the Quality and Effects of the Evils of Sin; and you cannot treat your Patient contrary to your own Sentiment and the Conviction of your Conscience; and then if you look on your selves as Judges, you ought to pronounce Sentence according to what you know of Justice in the Case, and not according to the Sentiment of the Criminal or Party, which makes *St. Bonaventure* cry out with Reason: *O what a strange manner of reasoning! What! Shall the Judge give Sentence according to the liking of the Accus'd. And shall not the Criminal be oblig'd to submit to his Judgment?* We have said already, that you ought to refuse Absolution to him, who would follow an Opinion, which you do not judge probable, or slightly probable; for if you judge it truly probable, tho' you shou'd believe it less probable or less sure: You ought not in this Case to refuse Absolution; it being possible that other Divines, considerable both for  
Learning

Learning and Piety, shall judge the same Opinion more probable; so it would be blameable to oblige your Penitents to follow your sole Opinion, which may appear to you more probable; lest in their Turn, your own Confessors should have right to use you with the same Rigour, when they shall be perswaded that their Opinion has the Advantage to be more probable than yours. *Cabass. in jur. can. Theor. & prox. lib. 3. cap. 13. n. 10.*

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## C H A P. LIX.

*Divers Objections against the foregoing Doctrine with their Answers.*

There are several Objections made against this wise and prudent manner of dispensing the Grace of Absolution in the Sacrament of Penance, so conform to the Canons, even of these latter Ages, and the Doctrine set down in the R. Ritual. But the Reasons alledg'd to the contrary, can never perswade knowing and understanding Confessors to hazard the Sacrament, and the Salvation of Souls by hasty and indiscreet Absolutions

Absolutions; for if you examin them, you will find they are groundless, and of no Consideration.

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## C H A P. LX.

### *The first Objection and Answer.*

THE first Objection that is made, is to tell you, there are Abundance of Confessors that practise the contrary to what we have noted above; because we know certainly, that there are very few Penitents who are sent away without Absolution; and yet all sorts of Sinners present themselves, and very many of them, who have heavy Burthens, which have lain hard upon them, for a long time. We answer, that it is but too true, that many Confessors give Absolution indifferently to all that come; but it is maintain'd, that in so doing, they discharge not the Duty of their Place. This Answer is taken out of St. Bonaventure, who says on this Subject: *If you say to your selves, we see every Day the contrary Practis'd: I answer, so much the worse for those who do it; for, in not observing the Canons, they sin grievously. In Confess. cap. 4. de usu clauium*

*clavium.* part 1. This Facility in Confessors, who are otherwise Good and Learned Men, has its Root in Self-love, which makes them easily incline to accommodate themselves to their Penitents Desires, that they may avoid Disputes with them, if they should use the Power they have of binding, that is, of deferring or denying Absolution. The same Self-love which is always ingenious in eluding all Laws, and in defending those who break 'em, furnishes abundance of plausible Pretexts; but such Persons would do well to remember what St. Paul says, *Gal. 1. v. 10. If I yet did please Men I should not be a Servant of JESUS CHRIST*

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## C H A P. LXI.

### *The Second Objection.*

THE 2d. Objection is very common, which says, That by refusing Absolution, the Penitent is put into great Trouble, instead of procuring him an Interior Peace, which is one of the principal Effects design'd by the Sacrament of Penance. To this we answer; That it is far better, that the Sinner now should have his Conscience in Trouble, by



by feeling its Reproaches, which force him, in a Manner to leave Sin, than to be expos'd too late, that is, at the Day of Judgment, to that terrible Remorse, which impenitent Sinners feel on that dreadful Occasion, of which the Scripture says; *That they shall be troubled with terrible Frights.* Besides, the interior Peace which Sinners aspire to, is, as it were, the Fruit of Peace, which is made with God by leaving Vice; which Peace Confessors chiefly, nay, only aim at, when they refuse Absolution; So that if Sinners do not leave Sin, it is in vain to expect that Peace, and therefore it may be said with St. Cyprian; *That it is a false and deceitful Peace, dangerous for those who give it, and unprofitable for such as receive it. De lapsis, cap. 28.* And this is what God assures himself by his Prophet, 'Isai. 48. v. 22. *That there's no Peace to the Wicked.*

## C H A P. LXII.

*The third Objection.*

THE 3d. Objection is, That the Confessor ought to comfort, and not to contristate Sinners, which he would certainly do, by sending them away without Absolution. To which you may answer; That it is the Duty of a good Confessor to comfort the Sinner as much as possible, both by Words and all other Means; but this ought to be done without betraying his Ministry, and deceiving the Sinner himself: Therefore in the Cases where you judge, according to the Rules abovemention'd, that it is necessary and proper to defer or refuse Absolution; you cannot give the Penitent that Comfort and Satisfaction of Absolution, as he desires, it being contrary to his own real Good; but you are to take Care to accompany this Refusal with Exhortations and Instructions, full of Charity and Sweetness; so that he may perceive and own, that it is for his own Advantage, that you proceed with him in this Manner: You are to tell him, that 'tis true you have him at present

present in Sainess; but that this Grief will prove very wholesome by working in him a solid and firm Repentance, according to the Words of the Apost. 2. Cor. 7. v. 10. *The Grief which is according to God will produce for the Soul a stable Repentance.* And that if he will but put in practice the Advice and Instructions you have given him; you confide so much in the Goodness of God, that you do not doubt, but that he will be soon satisfied and comforted with the State he is in.

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## C H A P. XLIII.

### *The fourth Objection.*

THE 4th. Objection is, That 'tis a good Sign the Penitent is truly repentant and dispos'd to turn to the Grace of God, when he earnestly desires to be absolv'd; and if so, he may be absolv'd without any farther Trouble. The Answer is, That an earnest Desire of Absolution is often very equivocal: For most Penitents look upon Sacramental Absolution to be like those Pardons the secular Judges give in criminal Matters, believing all are well absolv'd, who receive Absolution.

Absolution. Others desire Absolution very earnestly, that they may avoid the Confusion they might meet with in the World, if it should be known that they had not receiv'd it. Others there are, who desire it, that they may not be oblig'd to come for it again, and protest they have a true Sorrow for their Sins; and promise with their Lips, that they will change their Lives. But we may say of all those Penitents, as St. Ambrose did; *That they seek not so much to leave their Chains, as to load the Priest with them; for they do not discharge their own Conscience from Sin, but entangle that of their Ghostly Father.* Lib. de pen. cap. 9. &c. Thus are these Penitents to be answer'd by this great Doctor; Reason representing to them, that an Absolution ill given, does not free from their Sins, but only loads the Confessors Conscience with them.



## C H A P. LXIV.

*The Fifth Objection.*

THE 5th. Objection is, That the Penitent going from the Confession Seat dissatisfied, will speak ill of his Confessor, and fall into the Sin of Impatience, and so will add new Sins to the old. The Answer is, that such sort of Sins are not to be imputed to the Confessor, who for good Reasons, has thought fit to refuse Absolution; but rather to the ill Disposition of the Penitent, who blinded by Pride, looks on the Refusal as an Injury done him; and by his Impatience and injurious Complaints, falls into Passion against his Confessor. But as the like Transports of the Pharisees against Jesus Christ, did not hinder him from declaring War openly against their Vices: So the Confessor may and ought to do the like in private and in the Confession Seat, having the Example of our Saviour before him.

## C H A P. LXV.

*The Sixth Objection.*

THE Sixth Objection is this, It is common to say, that the refusing of Absolution to the Penitent, occasions a double Scandal; *First*, To those who are near the Confession Seat; And *Secondly*, To such as observe, that the Penitent does not go to Communion. As to the first Scandal, 'tis answer'd; that knowing and prudent Confessors pronounce the words of Absolution with a low Voice, insomuch, that none of the By-standers can observe whether Absolution is given or no: Besides, in Case Absolution is not given, the Confessor repeats the Prayers of *Misereatur & Indulgentiam*; telling the Penitent, that he has not receiv'd Absolution; and as for the Second Scandal, we answer; *First*, That several Reasons may, without injuring the Truth, be alledg'd for not communicating after Confession; the one being no necessary Consequence of the other; *Secondly*, He who abstains from the Communion, cannot properly be said to give Scandal; perhaps it may occasion some  
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Surmise or Wonder, which is not Reason enough to permit a Sinner to approach to the Eucharist; tho' some might thence suspect, that it is caus'd by some Secret Sin. This is Pope *Innocent III's* Resolution upon this Subject. *The Sinner ought rather to chuse to render himself suspected in abstaining from Communion, than to eat unworthily the Body of our Saviour, in the Holy Eucharist. Lib. 4. de miss. Miss. cap. 13.* Besides, if the Penitent is oblig'd to refrain from Communion every Time he is unworthy, that is, when he finds himself not free from Affection to Mortal Sin; what Injury does the Confessor do him, in assisting him to discharge the Obligation he lies under? If indeed the Matter were only to defer Absolution, that he might be better dispos'd for it, and had otherwise all the essential Requisites for it; I say in this Case, if there were any real Danger of some great Surprise in those who should see him not go to Communion, then it were better to give him Absolution, than to defer it; *Thirdly*, We answer, that the Acts of the Penitent, being, as it were, the Matter of the Sacrament of Penance; if the Confessor has no Moral Certainty that his Penitent has those Acts, he cannot under what Pretexes soever pronounce the Sacramental words of Absolution, no more than, when going to Baptise; he can

can say, *I Baptise thee*, if he has not Water to pour upon the Child; so that a Confessor, who by a mistaken Prudence and irregular Charity, should pretend to act otherwise, would instead of remedying the Scandal, render himself guilty of a double Sacrilege. Be not therefore surpris'd or frightened at the Word Scandal, but if you find that even some Priests, who are preparing to say Mass, and the People expecting, are ill dispos'd, refuse them Absolution, telling them you cannot administer the Sacrament without the necessary Matter: In which Case, if these same Priests cannot find any Pretext of avoiding great Scandal, they may make use of Contrition, after having earnestly begg'd it of God, as they would do, if they could not find a Confessor.

CHAP.



## C H A P. LVI.

*The Seventh Objection.*

**T**HE Seventh Objection pretends, That the Penitent may dye before Absolution, and so be Damn'd. To this we answer; *First*, That Absolution given without necessary Dispositions, signifies nothing for Eternal Salvation; but it is rather prejudicial, and generally speaking, 'tis for want of these Dispositions, that Absolution is refus'd; *Secondly*, 'Tis a Temptation of the evil Spirit, to harbour such Apprehensions of the Judgements of God, when so ill grounded. The Fear of Damnation is Good, when you are upon the Point of Sinning, or to spur you on not to defer your Repentance; but it is evil, when it tends to hinder the Sinner from taking such Measures and Time, which are proper to prepare him for a good Confession, and a sincere and true Conversion. It is worth observing, that a Sinner will pass a Year, and perhaps longer in the State of many Mortal Sins, and perhaps commit more the very Day he is going to Confession, and yet the Trouble or Apprehension

Apprehension of the Judgments of God makes not any Impression upon him; but if you let him know, that it is necessary to take some Time to exercise himself in Virtues opposite to those Sins, which he is accusom'd to, and in Works of Penance, in order to reap the Fruit; 'tis only then, that he finds himself press'd with the Apprehensions of Death and Hell. Now, who does not see, that this is an Artifice of the Devil, the Enemy of our Salvation? Who proceeds herein as he does in Regard to Shame, which he restores to Sinners when they go to Confession; so to stop their Mouths, after having depriv'd them of it, when he prevail'd with them to commit the Sin: Even so, after he has raz'd out of their Heart and Mind the Fear of being damn'd, whilst they offended God without Restraint or Remorse, he then returns and sets it in a lively Manner before their Eyes, the Moment that a good Confessor begins to talk of deferring Absolution, that the Penitent may not live and dye in Impenitency; *Thirdly*, It is a Sign of little Confidence in God's Goodness, to think or believe he will take away the Sinners Life, when he designs to employ it for the appeasing the Divine Justice by doing Works worthy of Repentance, after he has preserv'd his Life, even when he made  
no

no other use of it but to offend him. But suppose he should dye without Absolution, he would still dye in the State of Repentance, and consequently in a Condition to attain Eternal Happiness; for in this Case *JESUS CHRISIT*, the Sovereign Priest supplies that which the Penitent could not obtain by his Minister, who endeavour'd to dispose him by more abundant Helps to receive sanctifying Grace before he dy'd. This is what the Church believ'd, when formerly she ordain'd publick Penitents to stay for some Years before they could obtain Absolution, and Catecumens also, before they were admitted to Baptism; tho' many of them dy'd before they were either Baptiz'd or Absolv'd. We have Proof of this Belief of the Church, in Canon. 79. of the 4 Council of *Carthage*, 13. And of the 2d. Council of *Arles*, and many others. St. *Ambrose* witnesses the same in the Oration he made upon the Death of *Valentinian*. St. *Bernard* was of the same Opinion in the 12 Century, when even all Penances were private and particular, as they are at this Day. " *If a Sinner* says he, be  
 " *truly penitent* and being surpris'd by any  
 " accident, he cannot go to Confession,  
 " we ought to have a full Confidence  
 " that the Sovereign Priest finishes in him  
 " what the Minister of the Church  
 " could not do; and to esteem that done  
 before

“ before God, which Man would have  
 “ done, but could not; because it was  
 “ not Contempt, but Necessity that hin-  
 “ dred him finishing his Confession. St.  
 “ *Bernard. de humana condi. cognitione.*

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## CH A P. LXVII.

### *The Eighth Objection.*

THE Eighth Objection is, That the Tribunal of Penance, being a Tribunal of Mercy, it seems, that none ought to depart from it, without receiving the Effects of that Mercy. The Answer is; 'Tis very true, that the Tribunal of Penance is a Tribunal of Mercy; but 'tis for such as are dispos'd to receive it, otherwise as St. Cyprian observes; *Under the Appearances of Mercy it will prove a deceitful Evil, which will ruin us by flattering of us*; and to make use still of the same Fathers Expression. The Kindness of such Confessors would be like to that of an unskilful Surgeon, who instead of curing dangerous Wounds, only heals them superficially, to spare putting his Patient to Pain. *They cover, says this Holy Bishop and Martyr, the wounds of the dying Person, and apply an insignificant*

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*ficant Plaister to a mortal Wound, which penetrates to the very Entrails; for fear of putting the Patient to pain. De lapsis n. 58. 60.*

## CHAP. LXVIII.

### *The Ninth Objection.*

THE ninth Objection, That the Eternal Truth has declar'd in Holy Writ, that whensoever the Sinner shall deplore and grieve for his Sins, he shall obtain Pardon: Whence it follows, that the Confessor perceiving that the Penitent Sighs, Knocks his Breast, and gives other exterior Tokens of Repentance, has sufficient Cause to believe, that he is that Moment converted to God; tho' for the Time pass'd, his Life was wholly engag'd in Criminal Habits. To this we answer, That this Sentence or Text is not to be found in any part of the Bible, tho' tis commonly cited by several Authors as a Text of Scripture. 'Tis true, God promises by the Mouth of his Prophet *Ezekiel* cap. 3. v. 12. That the Malice and Impiety of a Sinner shall not hurt him, so soon as he has forsaken it and is converted; but it is upon that Condition

Condition; as is declar'd in the 14. 15. 16. verses; That he is to leave off all Impiety and Sin in his Actions, particularly setting down the chief Good Works which are to be practis'd by him who is converted to God; after which he adds as a Conclusion, that when he shall have fulfill'd all these things, then all the Sins he had before committed, shall not be imputed to him. All this shews that a Sigh or a passing Groan, is not a sufficient Mark of a true Conversion, as those would have us believe, who alledge that pretended Text of Scripture.

## CH A P. LXIX

### *The Tenth Objection.*

**T**HE tenth Objection, There are Confessors, who to excuse their Facility in giving of Absolution, seek for Reasons, where there are none; and say that the want of a considerable Amendment; and the Neglect of keeping out of, immediate Occasions of Sin, are not infallible Tokens, that the Penitent is not truly converted at the Time when he is at the Priest's Feet, and declares that he will change his Life, and quit all immediate Oc-

casions, giving some other Exterior Signs of Repentance; so that it may probably be believ'd, that he is in such a State. To which we answer, That this sort of reasoning proves too much, and therefore it proves nothing; for were it to take place, it would follow, that there would never be any Case, in which the Confessor ought to refuse Absolution; since we can never be assur'd that the Penitent, even after a hundred times promising, and as often breaking his Word, may not have the hundred and first Time, a sincere Desire of performing what he says. Now this would be contrary to all the Rules of the Church, as St. *Charles* informs us in his Instructions to Confession, and against the common Opinion of Divines. You are therefore to understand, that the Knowledge God has of the Interior Disposition of a Sinner, is of one Sort, and that a Confessor has of another. God sees the Bottom of the Heart; but Men cannot dive into what passes there, but by Means of certain outward Signs: Thus, whensoever he judges of his Condition according to these Signs, observing the Rules of Prudence he does the Duty of his Ministry: Whence it happens that God absolves the Sinner, as soon as he sees his Heart is converted; but a Confessor cannot absolve, unless he sees some Tokens of his Conversion, which

which are no other than the Effects of a good Will. Our Blessed Saviour says in the Gospel, *St. Matth. 7. v. 16. That it is by their Fruits you shall know them.* If the Fruits of a Penitent are frequent Mortal Sins, which he continues to commit, his Will is still evil and corrupted, but if they are Works of Penance, Exercises of Piety, and a remarkable Change of Life; then may we believe that the Will, which is the Tree that produces these Fruits, is effectually chang'd and converted. Hence it sometimes happens, that a Penitent whom God has absolv'd may be still bound by the Priest, who has only a Human Knowledge, by which he is to govern himself; and on the contrary, another shall be bound before God, tho' he is absolv'd by the Priest, because he had not the Dispositions necessary to receive the Effect of Absolution.



## C H A P. LXX.

*The Eleventh Objection.*

THE eleventh Objection which some make, is; That it is a sufficient Token that the Sinner has an efficacious Will to be converted, when he, of his own Accord, seeks after the Remedy, that is proper to procure his Conversion, (*viz.*) The Sacrament: And therefore it ought to be granted him, that he may compleat it. We answer; *First*, That this Argument would prove that we might give Absolution generally to all that come to Confession, which is expressly against the Rules prescrib'd by the R. Ritual, which requires the refusing of Absolution in several Cases. For all come voluntarily, and of their own Accord to the Tribunal of Confession, except perhaps those who would not come even at *Easter*, were they not constrain'd to it by the Command of the Church. *Secondly*, We answer, That there are many Sinners who feeling the Remorse of their Conscience, would and would not leave their Sin, according to the Words of the Wise-man. *The Slothful Man*

*Man will and will not.* Prov. 13. v. 4. They would leave it, because they fear Damnation; and they would not, because they are so strongly link'd and ty'd to it, by a long wicked Habit. They could wish if it were possible, to unite *JESUS CHRIST* and *Belial* together; Light and Darkness; Sin with God, and it is upon this Score, that they seek for Confessors that are, as they call them, discreet and compassionate to Human Frailty; and who permit them almost always to come to the Tribunal of Penance with the same Sins or worse; making them believe, that they may be sav'd without changing their Life. There are some of these false Penitents, who also perform some good Actions and practice exterior Works of Piety, but without quitting the Habit of their Predominant Sin, nor the immediate Occasion they are particularly link'd to and engag'd in, falsely imagining, that God, who is Goodness it self, will support themselves in their Weakness: Others deceive them, with alike Illusion, believing that provided they give great Alms, the Divine Justice will not search into their Sins, tho' they continue still to commit them. But St. *Ambrose* informs us, that such Persons take wrong Measures, for they give their Money to God, and their Souls to the Devil. *Thirdly*, We answer, That many

go to Confession only out of Custom, that they may not be remarkable for their Negligence, and distinguish'd from others; insomuch that St. Charles says, *They come to confess, rather out of Custom and of Course, than out of a true Sense of their Sins, or a true Desire to change there Lives.* We will conclude this Answer with St. Cyprian; that altho<sup>s</sup> Sinners have recourse to the Remedies that can cure them, yet it belongs to those who have the Direction and Government, to examine their Dispositions, and not to grant them that, which they foresee will cause their greater Ruin; for *what Person dead in Sin, is there, that does not desire to return to a new Life?* Ep. 11. “ What  
 “ sick Man is there, that is not in hast  
 “ to recover his Health; but it belongs to  
 “ the Pastors and Ministers of the Church  
 “ to keep up to the Rules, and to in-  
 “ struct those who are in Ignorance, lest  
 “ they, being appointed Pastors of their  
 “ Flock, to watch over their Preservation,  
 “ should be the first that murder and  
 “ ruin them: For it is cruel imposing  
 “ upon Souls, to grant them that which  
 “ can only do them Harm; and this is  
 “ rather pushing them down a Precipice,  
 “ than stretching out a Hand to prevent  
 “ their falling by offending God anew.  
 Words truly worthy of such a Saint,  
 and an ancient Bishop of the Church.  
 CHAP.

## CHAP. LXXI.

*The Twelfth Objection.*

THE twelfth Objection is, That the Sacrament of Penance was instituted by JESUS CHRIST to blot out Mortal Sins committed after Baptism; and this as often as we shall fall, and therefore 'tis sufficient to confess, and repent at the Feet of the Confessor, and to make a Resolution never to Sin any more, to obtain Absolution as often as we have Occasion. We answer, It is very true, there are no Sins, whatsoever their Number or Quality may be, which are not remitted by the Sacrament of Penance; but this is always supposing a true Repentance and a firm Resolution to sin no more, which cannot be discover'd in such as do not change their Lives, and use the necessary Means to avoid Sin for the future, as we have observ'd before. This shews, there is nothing more injurious to the Sacrament, or the Goodness of our Blessed Saviour who ordain'd it, than the Disposition of such as presume to sin on boldly, in Hopes  
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that they shall receive Pardon in Confession; to such a degree, that when they are just upon the Point of committing Sin, they will say, *Oh I shall confess it? What should I have to say to my Ghostly Father without this;* with other such impious and sacrilegious Expressions; as if JESUS CHRIST had only instituted this Sacrament to give Men a greater Liberty to offend God; and as if it were wholly in the Power of Sinners to find upon all Occasions, and when they pleas'd those extraordinary Mercies; by which God gives the Life of Grace to Souls dead by Sin; and yet it is quite contrary, their Conversion becoming still so much the more difficult, the more they heap Sin upon Sin, adding to this the Contempt of the Sacrament and of him, who is the Author of it. Besides, it belongs only to Swine, to run from the Mire to fair Water, and so again from the fair Water to the Mire; whereas every Man that loves Neatness and Cleanliness takes great Care that his very Shoes be not much dirtied in the Mud: This is an Instance that ought to perswade Sinners, to give themselves up to the Motions of Grace, which presses them every moment to abandon Mortal Sin. We have said, more than once, that it is very rare for the Repentance of Habitual and Relapsing Sinners, to be true  
and

and sincere; but let us suppose, at present, that such Sinners have receiv'd justifying Grace every time they confess'd and were absolv'd; yet this ought not to set their Conscience at rest, since an Author no less remarkable for Learning than Piety, proves by Holy Scripture and Fathers; That such frequent passing from Mortal Sin to Grace, and from Grace to Mortal Sin, is commonly a "Mark of Reprobation. All those, says he, who commit Mortal Sins in this manner, that they spend their Life in falling and rising, regularly speaking and according to common Order are of the Number of the Reprobate. *Recapit de signis predest. et reprob. Tract. 2. c. 6.*

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## C H A P. LXXII.

### *The thirteenth Objection and Answer.*

THE thirteenth Objection: There are some who would defend the Facility of Granting Absolution by the Words of our Blessed Saviour spoken to St. Peter, where he commanded him to pardon seventy Times seven, that is, never to refuse to grant Pardon. To which we answer, That our B. Lord does not speak in

in that Place of Sins committed against God, but of Injuries, one Man receives of another; so that those Words of our Saviour cannot be apply'd to Confessors, as if they were to give Absolution to Sinners that were most inveterate in Habitual Sin; and this the Learned *Maldonatus* has well observ'd in his Commentary upon the 18. Chapter of *St. Matthew*.  
 “ This Sentence of our Saviour, *he says*,  
 “ does not to teach Priests to give Absolution rashly, to those who sin often;  
 “ but it obliges those that are injur'd to  
 “ be always ready to pardon the Offence  
 “ they have receiv'd.

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## C H A P. LXXIII.

### *The Fourteenth Objection and Answer.*

THE Fourteenth Objection is, That it appears by Experience, that Absolution being refus'd to habitual Sinners they come no more; and perhaps if they had not been sent away without Absolution, they might have receiv'd Remission of their Sins. To this we answer, That the Confessor in an Affair of this Importance, as is the Administration of the Sacraments, is not to be governed by a *Perhaps*; but to endeavour

deavour exactly to follow the Rules which the Church prescribes, and we have explicated above. The Sacrament of Penance, as well as all the others, can not be administred with a doubtful Matter, without a Sacrilege; except the Penitent were in evident Danger of Death. And tho' the Matter of this Sacrament be such, that the Priest cannot have a Physical Certainty, as he can of Water in Baptism, and Bread and Wine in the Holy Eucharist; yet he ought to have a Moral one, which excludes all positive and very probable Doubt; and that is such, when the Penitent does not seriously labour to change his Life; applying proper and necessary Means for that End, and removing the immediate Occasions, which may make him relapse.

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## C H A P. LXXIV.

### *The Fifteenth Objection and Answer*

THE Fifteenth Objection, There are Confessors who attribute the Relapses of their Penitents to Human Frailty which is great, say they; whence it follows according to them, that those Relapses, do not give any Reason to judge, that they have not true Sorrow,  
nor



nor a firm Resolution to sin no more, when they declare that they have it. To this we reply; That, in reality, Human Frailty is very great, but the Grace of *JESUS CHRIST* is strong and powerful to fortifie and support him in the Observance of God's Commandments, and that it is communicated in Abundance, even to great Sinners, according to St. Paul, *Where there has been* says he, *Abundance of Sin, God has dispenc'd a Superabundance of Grace* Rom. 5. v. 20. This is also attested by the infinite Number of Sinners of both Sexes, who have led Abominable Lives, yet have afterwards, by the Help of Gods Grace, found how easy, sweet, and light the Commandments of God, are as the Council of *Trent* describes them, when it says, *That the Commandments of our Lord are not heavy but on the contrary, his Yoke is sweet and his Burthen light.* Sess. 6 de Justific. cap. 11. For this Reason, the Apostle exhorts the Faithful to have Recourse to God, and to hope in his divine Goodness, in their greatest Temptations, assuring them *That God is Faithful*, and will not permit them to be tempted above their Strength, "but will Cause them to make Advan-  
"tage of Temptation it self, to the end  
"they may persevere, 1. Cor. 10. v. 13. It is therefore a Wrong to the Power and Goodness of God, to look on human  
Frailty

Frailty, as if it were forsaken by his Providence, and as if he were not careful to strengthen and support us in Temptations. Not but that among true Penitents, you may find some who through Frailty fall into Mortal Sin; But understanding and able Confessors, find no Difficulty in knowing and distinguishing these from others. If the Penitent is troubled for his Sins; if he is docible to receive, and faithful to fulfil the Advices and wholesome Rules set him by his Confessor; if he uses the Diligence requisite to amend and to avoid Occasions; if he perseveres in Prayer; he ought to be look'd on as a true Penitent; tho' he accuse himself of some Relapse into a Sin which was habitual to him; because it is rather to be look'd upon as an Effect of Frailty, occasion'd by his being so long habituated to Sin, than as an ill Fruit of a deprav'd Will. But, if on the contrary, the Penitents do not apply proper Remedies to cure them of Sin; if they take no Care to avoid the Occasions; if Penances, which may have some Proportion to their Sins, appear intollerable; if they do not use some necessary Endeavours to shake off the Yoke of Sin: These will be Tokens of an ill Disposition of the Heart, and not of Frailty: You are to take Heed herein, to avoid the Imprudence of many Confessors, who observing in Confession, that

that their Penitents have not relaps'd so often into their habitual Sins as formerly, conclude from hence, very unadvisedly, that they have chang'd their Lives, and quitted Sin; without examining Circumstances, which would inform them, that this less'ning of the Number of their Sins, does not proceed from the Change of their Will, but from Want of the Opportunity or the Absence of the Object of their Passion, or that they have been indispos'd, or some other Accident; in which Cases you ought to have no Regard to the Diminution of Sins; but on the contrary, continue to require of your Penitents certain Signs of a true Repentance, such as we have already set down. Remember also, what we have said above; that an immediate Occasion, is not only that which makes us fall often; but that also which being present, affords a great Allurement to Sin, because from this Temptation we may easily pass to Consent: Take Care also, that the Penitents who have been engag'd in habitual Sins or immediate Occasions, do advance in their Amendment proportionably, as they do in the Practice of Penitential Works and the frequent Use of the Sacraments. For the Sacraments do not render us Impeccable, nor the Works of Penance always prevent Relapses; yet it is certain, that they are both efficacious, and produce

produce their Effect, if the Sinner does not obstruct ; for they never fail to help the Penitent in his Recovery, which is but weak, till he attain to perfect Health.

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## C H A P. LXXV.

### *The Sixteenth Objection and Answer.*

**T**HE Sixteenth Objection : Some will say, That if the Confessor sees his Penitent, weeping and bewailing his Sins, he may in this Case absolve him, tho' as yet he has not chang'd his Life ; because he ought to suppose, that then he has a great Dislike of his Sins. To which we answer ; That it is possible the Penitent, besides these Tears, may give other extraordinary Tokens of Repentance, especially if he has never met with a Confessor before, that had lively represented to him his miserable Estate ; and beginning now to know it, he is ready to execute every thing that shall be enjoyn'd him ; the Confessor, in this Case, will have Reason to believe such a Penitent truly contrite, and consequently well dispos'd for Absolution ; but where those Circumstances are not, Tears without Amendment are not the Marks of true Repentance



Repentance; as St. Gregory the Great teaches us, in these Words. You must exhort those who deplore the Sins they have committed, and yet do not leave them, to consider seriously, that the Wicked often are touch'd with Sentiments of Compunction and some Desires of Justice, which however are of no Use to them; as likewise the Good are sometimes tempted to commit evil, without suffering any Prejudice, because they do not consent to it. *Pastor. 3. part. cap. 1. Admon. 31.* In which Words, the Holy Pope admirably discovers the Darkness and Disguises of the Heart of Man, which incline him to take the first Motions of Grace, leading him to a Conversion, for Compunction it self, without distinguishing between the Sense from the Consent. However, this great Pope would have Penitents, as well as Confessors remember, that as just Persons are often in vain tempted, because they do not consent to the Temptation, which leads them to Sin; so Sinners receive good Inspirations without Advantage, because they do not correspond so as to put them in Execution. The Holy Fathers think it not enough to say, that Repentance without Amendment is vain and unprofitable, as is to be seen in many Passages of their Books: But they add, that this Sort of Repentance renders them more impure and defil'd. *He says*

says St. Isidore, who deplores his Sin, and sins again, is like to him that washes an unburnt Tile; for the more he washes, the more Mud he makes. lib. 2 de Sacram. bono. cap. 13. This is precisely what happens to those, who from Sin, go to the Confession-Seat, and from the Confession-Seat return to their Sin; which is no more than compleating the Measure of their Sins by new Sacrileges, and rendring their Consciences more defil'd and impure. St. Greg. is of this Opinion, when he says, that he who laments his Sins, and does not leave them, becomes more guilty; because God having favour'd him so much, as to give him the Gift of Tears to do Penance, without making the Advantage of it, to perform what it was given him for; he becomes lyable to greater Chastisements. "He who deplores the Sin, which he committed, says he, and does not leave it, deserves to be punish'd more rigorously; because he contemns the Pardon he might have obtain'd by his Tears. And St. Aug. excellently expresses the Misfortune of such as give some exterior Marks of Repentance in Confession without amending their Lives. To knock your Breast, says he, and continue in the same Way of living, is as if you made a Pavement of Sin in your Souls. Serm. 28 inter novos Sermon For Sinners before Confession feeling some  
Scruples

Scruples and Remorse of Conscience for their Sins, walk, as one may say, upon rough stony Way, and so slip and hurt their Feet, which puts them to Pain; but after they have confess'd, and given some outward Marks of Sorrow, they trouble themselves no more, because they fancy, as this Doctor of the Church observes, they have made to themselves a well pay'd Road, in which they walk without Concern or Trouble.

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## C H A P. LXXVI.

### *The Seventeenth Objection and Answer.*

**T**HE seventeenth Objection, frequently made, is, That by the Doctrine above, it follows, we ought to suspect all those Confessions, after which Penitents have relaps'd into the same Sins almost as often as before; whence it would follow, that you ought to oblige most People to make their Confessions over again, which would put both Confessors as well as Penitents to Abundance of Trouble. To which we answer, That in this Case, you must avoid both Ex-  
 camtrs, which Card. *Cajetan* calls two  
 opposite

opposite Errors. *Vitandi sunt duo extreme Errores.* Opus. Tom. 1. Tract. 5. q.

3. The one is, not to make Penitents repeat their Confessions, when there are just Motives to doubt of their Validity; and the other extreme is, to make them repeat their Confessions upon every slight Occasion: If the Confessor perceives, that the Penitent has taken little or no Care to amend his Life; that he has been very negligent in avoiding immediate Occasions, or shaking off his Criminal Habits; and that he has rather confess'd out of Custom, than thro' a true Desire of Amendment: In these Cases, 'tis just to require the Penitent to make a general Confession; or at least, of all that Time which he has liv'd in the Manner abovemention'd. But on the Contrary, if it plainly appears, that he made some Efforts, and us'd Endeavours to deliver himself from his Habitual Sins, and to fly from immediate Occasions, and has satisfied other Essential Duties, belonging to the Sacrament of Penance; altho' he had relaps'd some few times: You ought not therefore, to oblige him to make a general Confession. You might only advise him to do it for the greater Repose of his Conscience; provided you have not Reason to apprehend, that it may cause Trouble to such as are subject to Scruples.



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C H A P. LXXVII.*The Eighteenth Objection and Answer.*

THE eighteenth Objection says, That if we require in a true Repentance a notable Amendment, and a Docility to submit to what the Confessor directs; there will be but very few Penitents that deserve Absolution; so that you must then send a considerable Part away without it. To this we answer; That if all Confessors were uniform in observing the Rules prescrib'd by the Church, as they are absolutely oblig'd; the Inconvenience mention'd, would soon cease, because Sinners would then learn from this Conduct of Confessors, to have another Idea or Notion of Penance, than what they have at present; and would endeavour to put themselves in a Condition to receive Absolution. And if some of them should not return till Easter, after having been refus'd or deferr'd Absolution; they would make it appear, that they have no great Desire to quit Sin, as having declin'd the Means which were to be taken for delivering themselves from it; and therefore, it would be a less Evil to defer Absolution, than  
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to give it only in Appearance. It is a great Sin in Confessors, who under divers Pretences, indifferently absolve the most criminal heinous Sinners; because they ruin all Ecclesiastical Discipline, and are the Cause, that Sinners continue to repeat the same or even greater Sins, without any Difficulty; as the Council of Roan observes in these Words. *This great Facility in often remitting the greatest Crimes, is the Cause, why the Ecclesiastical Discipline loses all its Vigour, and Sinners become more audacious, to commit the same Sins, and even greater.* Therefore, that you may not be guilty of so great a Fault, do not forget the Advice given by Innocent III. in the 4. Gen. Coun. of Lateran: Truly, says this Pope, speaking to the Bishops and Priests; *since among other Evils, there is one, which very much troubles the Holy Church, and is the false Repentances: We warn the Bishops our Brethren, and the Priests, that they do not permit the Souls of the Laity to be deceiv'd and hurried headlong into Hell by these false Repentances.* And if such as are Penitents in Appearance, be angry at the Delay of Absolution, which you make use of, for the Good of their Souls, and in the sweetest and most charitable Manner you are able: You must have Patience in hopes, they will come to themselves, and in time will own they are oblig'd

oblig'd to you, provided they do not meet with some Confessor, who to their Ruin, will take their part, and tell them they had Reason and Right, when they were most in the wrong. This is what may be confirm'd by the Words of the R. Clergy writing to St. Cyprian in a *sede vacante*, touching those Christians, who deny'd their Faith before the Time of Persecution, and press'd earnestly for Absolution. *We are sure, say they, that these Persons coming to themselves in Time, and abating in their first Heats, will be content and very well satisfy'd that they were put off, according to the Rules of a holy and faithful Discipline; provided they do not meet with People that will raise them to a Rebellion, at the Expence of their Salvation, and who by their ill Counsels, instead of deferring, which would have been a wholesome Remedy, will press them to receive the Poyson of precipitated Communion, which will be the Occasion of their Ruine* Where observe, that the Word *Communion* signifies a Reconciliation with God and his Church, in the Sacrament of Penance.

## C H A P. LXXVIII.

*The nineteenth Objection and Answer.*

**T**HE nineteenth Objection is, another Invention, which Confessors now adays have found out to excuse the Absolutions they are so easy in giving. They pretend, that if they do not refuse Absolution to habitual Sinners, it is, because they would strengthen them against Relapses, by giving them the Sacrament, which is not of less Vertue to preserve from Sin, than it is to remit it; which is the Reason they not only have no Scruple upon that Facility with which they give Absolution, but believe it their Duty so to do, that Sinners may not be depriv'd of the most powerful Means they can have of abstaining from Sin. This Reason has something specious; but it disappears, as soon as examin'd, and discovers its Falsity. The Answer then is, That it is most certain and true, that the Sacrament of Penance being really receiv'd, remits by Means of the Sanctifying Grace all the Sins a Sinner truly repents of, and besides gives him a Right to all the actual Graces, which may preserve him from committing new ones. But we deny what the Objection supposes, which is, that habitual Sinners commonly receive

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these



these Effects of the Sacrament, because not having true Contrition, as we have all along prov'd, they do not effectually receive the Sacrament. This all Confessors will be easily convinc'd of, if they reflect, that the Sacrament being effectually receiv'd, infallibly produces its Effects, when it meets with no Obstacle. How then can any one conceive that it has been receiv'd effectually by an Habitual Sinner, in whom we see no Amendment; or if we do, it is so little, that it may well be attributed to several other Causes. However, the Sacrament, except in some extraordinary Temptation, ought to have preserv'd the Sinner from relapsing into his Habitual Sin; at least, for some Days after, by Means of the Graces it commonly communicates; which since it has not done, every wise and prudent Confessor may judge, that such a Penitent has not receiv'd the Effects of the Sacrament in former Confessions; because of his ill Disposition, and therefore he will do his Duty, if he appoints his Penitent some reasonable Time, to prepare himself better by proper and convenient Means.

## C H A P. LXXIX.

*The twentieth Objection and Answer.*

THE twentieth Objection, is of some Confessors, who being desirous to maintain, at any Rate, the Custom they are in, of never refusing Absolution, will still pretend, that he who has not true Sorrow of his Sins in Confession, ought to be sorry, that he cannot have it; and with this, he will be fit to receive Absolution; designing to give us to understand, that those two are not different, as really they ought not to be, if it be true, that either the one or the other is the Matter of the Sacrament. But who does not see, that this is a Subtilty without any Ground or Foundation; for Sorrow being nothing but a Sadness conceiv'd for the Absence of the Object which causes it; this alone makes it appear, that these two are quite different; for, 'tis evident, that what is absent, is different from that which is present: Thus, no Man ever thought, that the Dissatisfaction of not having Riches, was the same Thing as Riches; nor that the Sorrow for not being chaste, is Chastity. But the Council of *Trent* declares that it

is of Faith that Contrition is one of the three Acts of the Penitent, necessary to obtain an entire and perfect Remission of Sins, and thus it defines it. „ *Contrition* which holds  
 “ the first Place among the Acts of the  
 “ Penitent, is a Grief of Mind, and a De-  
 “ testation of the Sin one has committed  
 “ accompanied with a Resolution to sin  
 “ no more for the Time to come. *Sess. 14. de penit. cap. 4. et can. 4.* How then can any one pretend, against the express Doctrine of the Church, that a Sorrow for not having a Sorrow for their Sins can suffice: We may as well say, that a Resolution to have a good Resolution to leave Sin, without leaving it effectually, is sufficient for the Sacrament: And in this Manner, we may frame new Systems of Religious Matters, entirely foreign from the Faith of the Church. 'Tis true indeed, that a Sorrow which a Sinner conceives, for not having a true and real Sorrow for his Sins, being excited in him, by a Motion of the Holy Ghost, disposes him to obtain the same Grief for his Sins; provided that he continues to humble himself; and practise those Works of Penance, and have Recourse to the Divine Mercy; but it does not follow, that all on a sudden, he becomes fit to receive Absolution: The Experience of natural Things teaching us, that in each Matter, there is requisite an immediate Disposition; to the End, that a Form be introduc'd

introduc'd. Some one may perhaps say, that in Baptism, for want of Water, it is sufficient to desire to have it, and be effectually baptis'd; so one may say the same of the Sacrament of Penance, that for want of Sorrow, which is, as it were, the Matter; it is sufficient to desire to have this same Grief. To this we answer, that the Difference is great in these two Cases; for in the Case of Baptism, when we want Water, we do not pretend to administer Baptism, by pronouncing the Words or Form of the Sacrament without powring the Water upon the Cathecumen; but in the Sacrament of Penance, Confessors would administer the Sacrament and say; *Ego te absolvo*; I absolve you; without the Penitents having Sorrow for his Sins. So that all we can infer from this Comparison, is, That as the Cathecumen may receive Remission of his Sin, by a Desire or Vow of Baptism; in the same Manner, a Penitent may obtain Pardon by a Desire or Vow of Confession, provided he has a perfect Contrition. But it will never be true to say, that a Desire of Contrition, which is not Contrition it self, can ever be a sufficient Matter for the Sacrament of Confession.



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## CH A P. LXXX.

### *The one and twentieth Objection. &c.*

THE twenty first Objection, is of some Confessors, who perhaps will say, That if they refuse or defer Absolution to a Sinner habituated in some Sin, they may be the Cause, that the next Time, the Penitents will not confess their customary Sins, or will not tell the Number, that they may not give the Confessor Reason to think they have frequently fallen; whence it will follow, that instead of purifying their Souls by Confession, they will render them more defil'd and impure. To this we answer; That when a Confessor has done his Duty, to prevent that Inconvenience, by representing to the Penitents the Enormity of the Sacrilege they commit, in concealing a Mortal Sin in Confession: He will be discharg'd before Almighty God, if the Penitent should be prevail'd upon by the Devil to commit this Fault; and in Reality, this Method would be so far from avoiding a Sacrilege, that it would give Occasion to commit two, as he certainly would, if he should give Absolution to such as have not the necessary Dispositions to receive it. In this

this Case then, if the Penitent will damn himself in a Way to which the Confessor does not in any Manner contribute; the Confessor will deliver himself from Damnation but if the Penitent is damn'd by this other Way, to which the Confessor contributes, then they will certainly both perish together. This Objection is something like, as if one should say to a Physician; Take heed, for your Patient has a strange Aversion for such and such Remedies, which will give him too much Trouble, tho' never so necessary for his Cure: If you prescribe them to him in this Sickness, for which you are now call'd; it is to be fear'd, he will not send for you any more, but will rather chuse to dye: Now what can a conscientious Physician say to this, he will certainly reply; That for his Part he cannot but be troubled, that his Patient will not give him leave to apply those Remedies, which he knows to be according to the Rules of Physick, especially his Illness requiring such necessary Applications, and that if at another Time, he will not send for him, that he may not be oblig'd to take the like Remedies, it will be to his own Ruin, and he will be the Cause of his own Death; but that he cannot at present contribute towards killing of him, for Fear of not being sent for another Time.

**CHAP.**

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## CHAP. LXXXI.

### *The two and twentieth Objection &c.*

**T**HE two and twentieth and last Objection pretends that by refusing Absolution to habitual Sinners who are very numerous, we should hinder the frequenting the Sacraments, and by it many would be drove to Despair. This Objection has two Parts; which must be answer'd seperately: As to what relates to the frequenting the Sacraments, it is so far from hindring, by refusing Absolution to such as ought not to have it; that on the contrary it will occasion such Sinners to dispose themselves for the future to frequent the Sacraments with Fruit; for having once quitted their bad Habits, and being reconcil'd to God, they will find themselves push'd on by a Holy Desire to approach those Divine Sources of Salvation; whereas remaining in their criminal Habits, they either approach the Sacraments very seldom, or if they go often, they only add Sacrilege to Sacrilege. And tho' they sometimes deceive themselves, and give Marks of a Change by leaving off sinning at Easter, or when some other Solemnity approaches: However being never resolv'd to set the Ax to the Root of the Evil, by renouncing their ill Habits, they would not therefore cease to commit Sacrileges.

St.

St. Bernard very well describes the State of these false Penitents: We sometimes, says he, meet with Persons so disguis'd, that they scarce know themselves; they do not perceive the Worm that gnaws within; the exterior subsists, and they believe that with this all is safe: However, upon the first Opportunity, we perceive, that the Corruption which was in the Wound, breaks out, and that the Plant, from which some few Leaves had been cut, being deep rooted shoots out new Branches and Leaves more abundantly. After which he concludes; If then we will avoid this Danger, let us lay the Ax, not at the Leaves, but at the Root of the Tree. *Serm. 2. de Assump.* That is to say, if we would have our Repentance true and certain, we are to root out ill Habits, which are so many cursed Plants deeply rooted, and we must not content our selves with picking off two or three Leaves, that is. retrenching some few Actions, by avoiding some Sins, and for some set times, as is mention'd above.

As for the other Part of the Objection, which pretends, that deferring Absolution will be apt to throw People into Despair. To this we answer; That neither the R. Ritual, nor the Generality of Divines, who admit and require a Delay of Absolution in some Cases, according to Card. de Lugo de *Sacram. Pœnitent. Sect. 10 n. 170.* had any Regard to this vain Pretext, because they knew very well, that Despair proceeds from



from our looking upon the Possession of an absent Good to be impossible, or too difficult for us to attain to it, which is not in the Case before us; because Faith teaches us, that God does not command impossible Things, but on the contrary, he assists the Sinner powerfully to rise from his Sins, provided, that he contributes, on his Part, what he ought. And it is this that the Confessor ought to represent to him on the Part of God. If the Penitent is faithful to perform what the Priest who is the Minister of *JESUS CHRIST* appoints him, he will soon feel the Effects of his all powerful Grace, and find the Truth of that Oracle to be verified, which assures us that the Yoke of his Commandments is sweet, and the Burthen of his Divine Law light and easy: But to countenance false Repentances, to pass for current, upon Pretence, that we must not put People into Despair, is to take the High way to lead them to Damnation, which is the Place of Eternal Despair.

This Pastoral Instruction is become too long, but it being a Concern of the greatest Importance it was difficult to shorten it. The Directions here prescrib'd will appear to be conform to the Gospel, the Doctrine of the Church, the Sanctity of the Sacrament, and the Necessitys of Souls who every day, we may say, suffer Shipwrack in the very Haven. We have taken them,  
partly

partly out of the Holy Fathers and other good Authors, and partly from the Principles of Divinity, chusing those which have appear'd to us most proper to root out, and destroy Sin, and establish the Kingdom of God in the Hearts of the Faithful, according to this Word of our Saviour : *The Kingdom of God is within you.* And if, because a great Number of Confessors take another Way and Conduct, you may be tempted to Continue to use the same as before, in the administring of the Sacrament of Confession, which will only be known to God, what remains for me (if what I have set down cannot prevail) is to advise you to reflect upon what Card. *Bellarmin* writ to the Bishop of *Chieti* his Nephew, upon the Subject of Customs and Opinions of Men, in Matters or Things, which concern the Eternal Salvation of Souls. " Who-  
" ever, *says this Cardinal*, desires to se-  
" cure his Salvation, is absolutely to search  
" after certain Truths, and not to stop at  
" what many say or do, now a days; and  
" if he cannot plainly discover what is  
" certain, he must hold to that which is  
" surest, and let neither Reason, Authori-  
" ty, or any temporal Advantage induce  
" him ever to prefer what is less sure: For  
" the great Affair we have in this World,  
" is that of our Salvation; and there is  
" nothing easier, than by the Example of  
" others

“ others, to form an erroneous Conscience  
 “ which leads insensibly and without Re-  
 “ morse, those who follow it to Damna-  
 “ tion and Hell, where the Worm that  
 “ gnaws them, dies not, and where the  
 “ Fire that burns, does not consume them.



**FINIS.**

